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CHAPEL TALKS

COMBINED EDITION

Containing the talks originally published in

INVITATION TO WORSHIP
and

RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP

A. C. REID

ABINGDON PRESS

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Nashville

100 CHAPEL TALKS

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PREFACE

A SERVICE OF WORSHIP IS A MEANS OF APPROACH TO GOD. IT IS AN offering of the human soul to the Eternal Spirit. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Worship is an ineffable communion of the human soul with the divine will. It enables a person to become aware of spiritual reality, to appreciate supreme values, to be purged of impurities, and to devote himself to Christian principles. Worship is, therefore, a person's highest privilege and greatest need.

Although no place, however beautiful, and no ritual, however excellent, must ever be substituted for worship, they are valuable aids to worship. The Harvard College Chapel is beautiful. Its hand-finished oak paneling and furniture and the great organ make it a lovely place of worship. Then, too, about sixty years ago the university adopted an order of service for morning prayers, designed to promote the spirit of worship. The men who planned the order of service had a profound sense of the nature of worship and the need for worship, and they were aware that every part of a service of worship—music, scripture reading, address, prayers—is an offering to God.

The service in the Harvard College Chapel begins exactly at a quarter of nine in the morning, and it lasts only fifteen minutes. It consists of: responsive reading; anthem; scripture lesson; address; prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer; hymn; and benediction. The organ prelude and postlude fall outside the fifteen-

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minute period. The service is so carefully planned and conducted that it is unhurried and moves with unaffected dignity and precision. It was in this setting that most of these chapel talks were given.

It was my privilege to serve as guest preacher in the Harvard College Chapel during two summer sessions. It was not easy for me, a layman, to prepare a five-minute address for every weekday morning in keeping with the beauty and the traditions of the chapel. In fact the responsibility of leading a service of worship and of speaking in the name of the eternal God to immortal souls is terrifying. However, kind and sympathetic members of the congregation at Harvard requested copies of the talks. These later appeared in two volumes, *Invitation to Worship* and *Resources for Worship*, and many generous persons wrote me of their use of the addresses in private devotions and in public worship. If this edition, which combines the two volumes, helps any person in his effort to worship or enables him to lead others more effectively in worship, I shall be glad.

A. C. REID

Wake Forest College

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INVITATION TO WORSHIP

1

Consecration

O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth.

Sing unto the Lord, bless his name: shew forth his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.

For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.

Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength.

Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

—PSALM 96:1-9

THE SANCTUARY IS A HOLY PLACE WHERE ONE MAY COMMUNE WITH Almighty God in spirit and in truth. It is sacred ground where man, in faith, consecrates himself to the Eternal and, in love,

dedicates his life to the preservation and development of human rights and liberties.

In this great psalm the writer states that strength and beauty are in the sanctuary. He is contemplating the two massive pillars in the Temple. Tall and majestic, they represent latent and active power. With their capitals adorned with lilies, they are also symbols of beauty. The writer first observes strength by itself. Taken alone, strength is austere, inexorable, awe-inspiring, and potentially dangerous. Unrestrained physical power can become a devastating cyclone or a destructive earthquake. Unbridled thought, appearing in an absolute monarchy, in an undisciplined democracy, or in a religious hierarchy, can impoverish and enslave souls.

The writer likewise observes beauty alone. When unrestricted, beauty may lead to mere empty sentiment or inflammatory emotion, dangerous to an individual and to society. But the psalmist goes further. He sees strength and beauty combined. When they are thus joined, they both restrain and enhance each other, so that there appear the inimitable Greek temple, the glory of the sunset, and the spangled sky at evening.

But the psalmist does not stop with strength and beauty united. He sees them consecrated to God. They are in the sanctuary. It is thus that human personality appears like the reaches of a lofty Gothic cathedral—strong, beautiful, consecrated.

It is fitting, therefore, that we who seek strength and beauty should step apart for a little while to the quietness of the divine sanctuary, that, surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, we may feel the presence of the eternal God and consecrate ourselves to him.

2

In the Beginning God

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

—GENESIS 1:1-5

THE OPENING STATEMENT IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS IS THE SUBLIMEST sentence in the realm of literature. It includes only ten short words, but the inspired writer of this great epic story let the sentence become so charged with meaning that the reader is amazed.

The pronouncement is far-reaching in time. It specifies a dateless date. It is as a blank date covering all time. The writer leaves ample room for physics, whether one is interested in the most minute particle of physical substance or the far-flung realms of the stars. It provides time for geology, with the vast periods which that field reveals. It affords opportunity for the appear-

ance and development of life, with all the variations which plants and animals may have experienced, and the records which they have left in earth and stone. It leaves an abundance of time for the anthropologist, whatever may be his opinions with respect to the origin and development of man, societies, and types of religion.

Moreover, the writer associates God with creation. He thus leaves no place for the suggestion that the universe is only a fortuitous aggregation of naturalistic substances. Life is not the illusion which Omar cynically pictures as

A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste
Of BEING from the Well amid the Waste—
And Lo!—the phantom Caravan has reach'd
The NOTHING it set out from—Oh, make haste!

For the writer, men are not, as Voltaire once passionately exclaimed,

Tormented atoms in a bed of mud,
Devoured by death, a mockery of fate.

God is the Creator, and he is intimately related to the vast and continuous process of creation. Spirit is dominant over material things; and yet spirit is so intimately associated with material things that every atom and every star cluster bears the signature of deity. In all of the process of creation, from the void and darkness of chaos to the appearance of law that activates the electron and holds the Pleiades together, there is the influence of the divine principle. And, likewise, there appear the highest attributes and aspirations of the human mind and soul—freedom, courage, hope, faith, love—for God hath put eternity in our hearts.

3

Prerequisites to Worship

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein:

For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

—PSALM 24:1-5

FOR MANY OF US LIFE IS A SUCCESSION OF PROBLEMS AND TESTS OF ability. The psalmist here proposes the most exacting question and the most searching examination that one may confront. He does not ask who will be able to withstand the requirements of the classroom, of professional life, of industry, or of society. The question is this: Who shall be able to stand in God's holy place, exposed by the brilliant illumination of Truth? The answer specifies three necessary personal qualifications.

First, clean hands. The hand is a symbol of work. It represents all that one does. Work may consist of manual labor or

intellectual toil. It may be hard, productive, and honorable; or it may be parasitic, subversive, miserly, or beggarly. The hand also represents progress. Its very shape gives man a vast advantage over lower animals. With the hands instruments of precision are made, the wheels of industry are regulated, thought is recorded and transmitted, governments are established and defended, canvas is transformed into priceless treasures, and marble is converted into immortal beauty. Every normal person is expected to make some contribution. The problem is this: Are my hands made immaculate by work which is honest and constructive? Or are they contaminated by indolence, fouled by dishonor, or so stained by crime that "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten" them?

The second requirement is a pure heart. The heart is a center of life. It is the power station that sends food and other vital elements to different parts of the body. When the heart becomes feeble, the hands become weak; when it stops, the hands cease to function. The heart is the symbol of the mind, where motives have their substance. Mental infections—as selfishness, intolerance, and intemperance—poison and weaken life, and produce mental and spiritual feebleness. On the other hand, a clean mind is the foundation of character, the essence of refinement, and a sanctuary of knowledge. A clean mind is a source of strength, as Sir Galahad realizes when he says,

My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.

The third requirement is a contrite heart. Vanity is repulsive. The most intolerable and intolerant thing in the world is religious

vainglory. Christ could not penetrate a heart hardened by it. He knew that a right attitude is prerequisite to worship; so he gave the vivid parable of the Pharisee and the publican. Watch the Pharisee as he goes to the Temple to pray. Hear him say: "Look how good I am; see what fine clothes I wear; note how I tithe; observe how regularly I pray." And then watch the publican as he comes quietly into the presence of God, opens his breast, exposes his heart and lays it down, and says, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Through his humility, he becomes strong.

4

Prerequisites to Divine Revelation

And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day.

For they are impudent children, and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God.

And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

—EZEKIEL 2:1-5

MAN'S HIGHEST PRIVILEGE IS DIVINE COMMUNION. OUR GREAT PRESENT need is divine revelation, for in the midst of vast human accomplishments and perplexing movements it would reveal supreme values and give us a definite purpose.

It must be realized, however, that whether revelation occurs or not depends upon man himself. The experience of Ezekiel

clearly illustrates requirements that one must meet if one is to know the divine will.

First, one must have, in theory and in practice, a right attitude toward man. While no one can afford to be so stupid as to discredit any fine characteristics or accomplishments of man, it should be noted that the Lord did not address Ezekiel as a unit of physical energy, a superior animal, a fine intellect, or a distinguished social or religious leader. He used the words "son of man," which Christ loved to use in referring to himself, and which seem to embrace all of man's essential nature and designate him as immortal soul. It is this standard of respect, dignity, and right which man must follow with reference to himself and in his relationship with others.

Second, a man is expected to stand up. Ezekiel was lying on the ground; his vision was restricted to, and his mind was becoming like, the trash and creeping things before his eyes; and the Lord told him to stand up. God will not invade the sacred precincts of human will and reduce one to the status of a puppet. Nor does he reveal himself to one who voluntarily remains in degrading circumstances.

Third, a man is expected to exercise his own powers. Ezekiel was capable physically, mentally, and spiritually. He was able to quit himself like a man, and the Lord expected him to stand upon his feet. Progress in education, in government, in medical science, and in religion occurs as man endeavors to employ his own ability in these fields. It borders on blasphemy to say that God condones or rewards lethargy, indifference, and ignorance. A request becomes a prayer only when the suppliant is himself

willing to do all within his power to effect an answer to the petition.

When, however, a man actually regards himself and others highly, rises above the trash of life, stands up like a man, and wills to know and do, he has the promise that Jehovah will speak to him and give him a task worthy of a man. Ezekiel arose, heard the divine commission, received divine assurance, undertook a great and difficult task, and was recognized as a prophet of God.

The God of Ezekiel is our God.

5

Walking with God

And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:

And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

—GENESIS 5:22-24

THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTAINS MANY STRANGE AND UNUSUAL SECTIONS which excite justifiable imagination. The fifth chapter of Genesis reminds one of a burying ground. It resembles a book of epitaphs. As one reads this chapter, one finds one brief statement after another about different men, ending with the words, "and he died"—"and he died"—"and he died." But one suddenly comes upon a strange spot which, at first, seems out of place. It is a plot where there is no grave. No gravedigger's spade has touched it. It is clothed, as Matheson intimates, with perpetual life and beauty. And one finds there a monument, erected not to the dead but to the living. On the monument are these words: "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him."

If Enoch walked with God, there must have been a time when this expression of fellowship started. Perhaps it began when

Enoch was a youth, for, as a rule, it is in youth that interests are established, habits of mind and body take form, ideals are acquired, and feelings become developed and fixed. An old man, on the other hand, dreams dreams, his habits are settled, scarry tissue of body and mind is plentiful, and he is perhaps afraid to walk in strange high places.

There must also have been an hour and a place for these walks. The garden of the Lord is large, and contains many sections; the day is long, and full of opportunities. With some people the time is morning; with others it is when the sun is at the meridian; with others it is evening. With some the place is by the sickbed; with others it is in the office, the classroom, the workshop, or the orphanage. Some walk with God in the fields; others at the writer's desk, at the organ console, in the line of duty in defense of human rights, or in the quiet sanctuary of prayer. Wherever it may be, if one is hallowed by a spirit of reverence and wills to do the will of God, like the disciples on the way to Emmaus one will in some way feel the presence of the eternal spirit.

Moreover, there must have been communion between Enoch and God. The language used is unknown and immaterial. Perhaps there were no words. With intimate friends there is frequently no need for conversation. Divine communion may be similar to music and art and love, which inspire and ennoble, and have no boundary lines. Communion implies fellowship; the relation is that of host and guest, of a loving father and his son. John describes the situation in these words: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

6

The Divine Source

Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

—PSALM 84:9-12

AS A WISE GREEK PHILOSOPHER STATED, WORDS CANNOT CONVEY A CORRECT conception of God. Those who wrote the Bible story frequently used similes and metaphors to specify truths too profound for verbal expression. The psalmist here, in an effort to show the power and benevolence of Jehovah, says, "The Lord God is a sun." What does this metaphor imply?

The sun is the source of light. Physical light illuminates, reveals beauty and wealth, and exposes evils that lurk in dark places. It is the symbol of intelligence, safety, and progress. It is a means of clearing away jungles of disease, and noisome superstition and ignorance. The Lord is not only the author of physical light; he

is also the source of all knowledge, beauty, and progress. Take away the natural sun, and perpetual night will exist. Take away the Lord, and the night of ignorance, selfishness, moral pestilence, and utter hopelessness will prevail.

The physical sun is the source of power. Whence the coal and the petroleum that furnish power to our machines? Whence the cycle of heat, cloud, rain, streams, hydroelectric power that lights our homes and turns the wheels of our industries? And, likewise, whence the divine dissatisfaction of man; the energy and vision that make him look upward and walk forward? Who is the author of the ideals that illuminate mind, the ambitions which intensify generous motives, and the spirit of sacrifice which makes one give his life for that which he believes is right?

The sun is also the source of physical warmth. Through countless millions of years it stored up the fuel which we use. The sun supplants winter's frosts with the resurrection of spring and the harvests of summer and autumn. The psalmist regards the Lord as the source of comfort and joy, and the father of all generous impulses, benevolent enterprises, and humanitarian institutions. From him emanate concepts of "the good, the beautiful, and the true," the ideals of temperance, justice, and right, and all other noble incentives that lead to human advancement. The source may often be unrecognized, for, as Longfellow states,

As torrents in summer,
Half dried in their channels,
Suddenly rise, though the
Sky is still cloudless,
For rain has been falling
Far off at their fountains;

So hearts that are fainting
Grow full to o'erflowing,
And they that behold it
Marvel, and know not
That God at their fountains
Far off hath been raining!

Furthermore, the sun maintains all life. It is through warmth that natural life is preserved. Remove the sun even for a little while and the earth would become a vast sepulcher. Thus, the psalmist states that God is the keeper of our spiritual life, even through eternity, for, says he, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."

7

A Failure

And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

—GENESIS 13:8-12

IN A BEAUTIFUL PLACE IT IS UNPLEASANT TO SPEAK OF UGLY THINGS. The world, however, is filled with tragedies which one cannot justifiably ignore. Lot is one of the most repulsive failures mentioned in the Bible, for he started well and ended miserably. Lot

had youth, with its resiliency, time, and opportunities. He was well-born, for his uncle, Abram, was the wise, good, and wealthy man who became the father of the Hebrew people. Lot had unusual privileges, for Abram gave him wealth, defended him, and took him to the altar. But he became a pitiable failure. Why?

He was weak in character. He was neither considerate, nor courteous, nor grateful. He accumulated property, but he did not know how to live. There is no evidence that he possessed courage, refinement, or the desire to do right. He did not have the respect of his fellow citizens; and he had no good influence over his own family. He was a coward, and hid himself in a mountain cave. The curtain falls upon his wretched life while he is engaged in drunken, incestuous debauchery.

Lot failed because he had a little, undeveloped soul. He starved his spiritual nature, until his sense of right and decency became weak. He substituted the present for the future, the material for the spiritual. His vision for himself and his family was limited to well-watered plains, grass, and Sodom. From his birth to his death we find in Lot no trace of moral excellence. There is no evidence that he was interested in religion, even though he was associated with a deeply religious man. There is no proof that he ever actually worshiped, or even wanted to worship, although he was familiar with the altar.

Lot is no exceptional case. Esau, a man too weak to control himself, sold his birthright for a meal, and proved himself unfit for leadership. Saul, the first king of Israel, large in body and endowed with other fine characteristics, weakened his soul by harboring arrogance and jealousy, became a paranoiac, and died a miserable failure. The Pharisees, morally precise, scholarly, and

familiar with religious rites, were so dull in spiritual sensitivity that they could not recognize truth, suffering, and duty when they were before their very eyes. Judas was intimately associated with Jesus, but he never knew him. Pilate was clothed with official prestige, but he was nevertheless too weak to resist mob opinion.

Perhaps the gravest danger of the present time is to be found in the neglect of the spiritual; for it is a perilous situation when an individual or a nation is so familiar with temporal power and religions, and at the same time largely overlooks the need for spiritual development.

8

Little Things

And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.

And the woman conceived, and bare a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.

And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

—EXODUS 2:1-4

ONE FREQUENTLY FORGETS THAT INCIDENTAL EXPERIENCES MAY BE OF the eternal order. Many of us often become discouraged because it is difficult for us to discover tangible and valuable results of our work. We do not wish our lives to suffer defeat.

In the parable of the talents are these words of promise to anyone who is faithful to the trust of life committed to him: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." This is a statement of a law of increasing returns, which may operate in two ways. First, it applies to one's per-

sonal life. Demonstrated ability and trustworthiness bring one satisfaction and confidence in one's self, increase strength, and justify larger trusts. Second, one's influence does not cease with death, but extends over many centuries and generations.

Miriam, the little sister of the child Moses, gives us an unusual and graphic illustration of personal worth, and of permanent and expanding influence. As the little girl lingered near the river she was apparently doing nothing, but actually her work surpassed that of the sentinels of a great army.

First, Miriam was alert to the dangers that threatened a helpless child, and so allayed the anxiety of a troubled mother's heart. She was quick to exercise the diplomacy of love, and thus she saved her little brother's life. Moreover, by her faithfulness she was watching over the integrity of her own life; she was faithful to the simple duty assigned her, and thus she developed a spirit which in later years burst forth in songs of triumph.

Second, destiny rested in the palm of her little hand. The little girl did not realize that she was safeguarding one who would become one of the world's greatest organizers, legislators, and leaders of men, and—most of all—a peer among interpreters of God to mankind. She held the key with which the shackles of slavery would be removed from more than a million of her race. She had in her charge a great people, including not only Moses, but Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, David, the author of Ecclesiastes, the writers of the psalms, Paul, and a host of others who, throughout the long centuries, have given the world vast wealth of religion, philosophy, literature, and science.

The Pharaohs built great structures of stone; Miriam helped erect eternal, living pyramids in the mind and heart of mankind.

9

Good Leadership

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the King, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

—DANIEL 3:16-18

THE WORLD ADMIRES A GREAT LEADER. GOOD LEADERSHIP IS INDISPENSABLE to progress. In the present conditions of economic, social, and religious perplexity, it would be well to note some characteristics of wise leadership.

The writer of the Book of Daniel paints with bold strokes a scene in which men are tested as by fire and death. The picture exhibits the essential traits of young men who became eminently successful. The young men are captives, subjected to the humiliation of military defeat and bondage; but they attain, nevertheless, an enviable position of influence. What is the secret of their accomplishments?

First, the young men refused to compromise. They would not yield to intemperance with respect to their bodies. They seized the opportunity to train their minds, and became superior intellectually. They also refused to compromise their faith in God. A combination of physical strength, intellectuality, and faith in God gives unusual capacity for great leadership.

Second, these young men were tested and strengthened by ordeals. When the image of gold was dedicated, these young men were the only ones who did not bow in worship. They thus proved that they were not enslaved by custom, crowd psychology, ignorance, or fear of political despots. They were not victims of opportunistic policies, nor were they slaves to expediency. They were not even intimidated by fear of death. When they were brought before the king and given the choice of compromise or death, they replied with words charged with heroism and faith: "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us . . . out of thine hand, O king." That is courage. Then, with sublime insight which transcended reason and any consideration of personal safety, hope of reward, or even escape from oblivion, they expressed their devotion to God and the right thus: "But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." That is faith—faith in its purest sense.

Consequently, they were given places of prominence in Babylon, and they became the means of leading the king and the people of that great nation to a recognition of Jehovah. And to this day, wherever the gospel is preached, their temperance, their courage, their faith, and their leadership are proclaimed.

10

Results of Worship

In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.

And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

—ISAIAH 6:1-8

THE DRY FACTS OF LIFE SHOULD BE ENLIVENED BY THE DEWS OF LIVING truth. The cold realism of the world should be warmed by the glow of spiritual experience. Communion with the divine illuminates mind, replenishes strength, and converts motives. To one who desires to know the effects of worship, the experience of Isaiah is pertinent and suggestive. It has four significant characteristics.

First, the majesty of Truth was revealed. Isaiah became aware of God and the glory of God. We frequently suffer from the apparently unavoidable malady of overspecialization. Thus our vision often becomes obscured by a fog of particulars. Truth, therefore, seems restricted to phenomena; values appear commensurate with power and size; and one follows with vanishing hope an apparently dwindling road of human worth. One needs, therefore, to have the larger view, and to hear in one's soul the profound undertones of a spiritual world symphony, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

Second, Isaiah experienced humility. There are situations in which the mediocre seems superior. But when one stands in the presence of Perfection one perceives one's limitations, and with John Charles McNeill cries out:

We know, O Lord, so little what is best.
Wingless, we move so lowly;
But in thy calm, all-knowledge let us rest,
O, Holy, Holy, Holy.

Third, Isaiah was purged as by fire. It was as when one looks upon a great landscape of mountain or sea, reads a great poem, hears sublime music, or associates with a great personality, and

then yearns to substitute the perfect for the imperfect, the beautiful for the ugly, the good for the bad, and to be guided by truth as lovely Beatrice conducted Dante "along the terraces of heaven." When, before the altar, one's soul cries out, the good request will be heard, and one will be touched by the refining fire of forgiveness, sincerity, beauty, and goodness.

Finally, Isaiah gained a new conception of himself. Like Alice in Wonderland, man has in late years been nibbling at something that has reduced him to a feeling of insignificance. But when one stands in the presence of the Lord one is no longer a "frail creature of the dust"; no longer the "stuff that dreams are made on"; no longer an incident designed to pass into the "tongueless silence of the dreamless dust." One realizes that he is a part of creation, made in the image of God, a co-worker with God. And one thus stands with fearlessness and dignity in the face of vast opportunities and needs, and says, "Here am I; send me."

11

Spiritual Insight

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

—LUKE 2:25-30

SPIRITUAL TRAINING, WHEN COMPARED WITH MANY TYPES OF MODERN human accomplishments, appears to be exceedingly backward. In view of all of life's difficult problems the most significant theorem one may confront may be stated thus: Given mind and soul, to discover Truth.

Recognition depends upon training. Perception occurs in terms

of mental development. The physician has been taught to detect symptoms of disease; the mariner has become familiar with his charts; one has learned the language which one understands. Likewise, spiritual capacities must be developed. One must meet certain conditions of spiritual growth and insight if one is to become able to recognize the divine.

Simeon was a just man. He endeavored to do right. He probably made many errors, for then, as now, it was a difficult matter either to know or to do what was right. But he was honest in motive. He did not, as did so many others, let his vision become obscured by the fog of selfishness. The crowds who followed Jesus to be fed, or through mere curiosity, never actually saw him. The lawyer who tried to trick him, the priest and the Levite on the road to Jericho, and the Pharisees who robbed widows never knew him. The spiritual realm detests such evil motives, as nature abhors a vacuum. But a sincere and unselfish person, whether it be a widow bereaved, a blind man groping, or a scholar searching, will know that the Master is near.

Moreover, Simeon was devout. This does not imply weakness; it is rather a source of power. Abraham was a devout man; Moses was a devout man; Daniel and Paul and Isaiah were devout men; and what intellectual and spiritual giants they were!

Furthermore, Simeon had faith. This does not imply that he never doubted. One who never doubts perhaps never thinks seriously. He who has no doubts likely never stops to reflect upon the universality of suffering, tragedy, injustice, and death, and the apparent silence of God. There were many things which Simeon never understood. He probably spent many hours bitterly reflecting upon Roman oppression and the evils of his own people.

But he was a just and devout man, and in some way he knew that he would see the Lord's Christ.

In our perplexities, what does the Lord require of us but "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with . . . God"?

12

A Decision

And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, east thyself down from hence:

For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee;

And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

And Jesus, answering, said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. —LUKE 4:3-12

A SERIOUS PERSONAL PROBLEM IS THIS: TO WHAT END SHALL I LIVE? One passes this way only once, and one should possess the wisdom, the vision, and the determination necessary to choose wisely. The example of Jesus, when he had to make a decision in face of severe and comprehensive temptations, is worthy of serious consideration.

Jesus was tempted to compromise his divinity. He reflected upon his ability to work wonders by devoting his life to the realm of the natural world. What prowess of leadership in this field could be his! Jesus never discredited truth in any form in which it manifests itself. Christianity offers the finest challenge the world knows for intelligent investigation and creative work. A Christian may, therefore, regard all truth as God's truth, and he need not be afraid to explore or to discover. But Jesus saw beyond physical things. For him, spirit is prior to matter and values transcend things; and he utters those words which should now be heard in every part of modern civilization: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

He also had the opportunity to become a political leader capable of throwing off the Roman yoke and becoming the governmental master of the world. Christ approved government. He taught respect for authority and the law. He paid tribute to Caesar, called a tax collector to become his disciple, and found greatest faith in a Roman officer. But, with perfect vision, he saw beyond political power. His kingdom was not to be a temporal one; it would have no physical boundaries; it would exert no force except that of enlightenment and love. He therefore refused to worship before a political altar. Said he: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Then, too, he was tempted to compromise his religious leadership. To him came such temptations as these: Proclaim yourself the official leader. Exhibit your power. Use spectacular methods. Magic attracts. Issue official orders. Become the supreme, arbitrary ruler of a world-wide religious empire, and require that men be just and good. Jesus knew that religious organizations are indispensable. He established the Church, and the Church is his. But he realized that regeneration and the kingdom of righteousness would occur, not through the employment of external force, mechanics, creeds, or dogmas, but through enlightened love within the hearts of individual men and women.

So, resolved never to give primacy to the temporal, he made the choice of devoting his life to the establishment of a kingdom of love, although the decision would carry him to the cross; and it is not strange that the record states that he returned to his people "in the power of the Spirit."

13

A Personal Program

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

—LUKE 4:16-19

ANY THOUGHTFUL PERSON WOULD WANT TO CHOOSE A CAREER THAT IS honorable and constructive. He needs to feel that the major premise of his life is sound, and he wishes assurance that his work is in keeping with that premise. One does not wish, therefore, to come to old age uneasy and remorseful, and with suspicions and alarms about a misspent life crowding upon him. At the outset of his ministry, after Jesus had decided what his ministry should be, he went to his home church and stated his program in the

briefest and most comprehensive of great inaugural addresses.

He specifies the dominant motivation of his life. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." Jesus had experience with God. He thus became aware of the fact of Jehovah, and in the glowing light of his communion with God he clearly recognized his own divinity. Through that experience his soul became aflame, and there no longer remained any condition of uncertainty. Socrates knew something of this type of experience. Abraham, as he set out to found a new people, felt it. Moses was so amazed by its glory that he removed his shoes, for he felt that he was on holy ground. Saul of Tarsus was blinded by its brilliance and transformed by its loveliness. It is a dynamic attraction that may be characterized as an all-illuminating love. It is power that increases with consumption; an idealism that impels one to place the permanent above the temporal, right above duty, and principle above comfort.

Jesus next outlines for himself a daring, sane, and humanitarian program. It is selfless in interest, and it is the boldest and most comprehensive plan ever adopted. He specifies, or implies, every field of worthy human endeavor. The program includes every need of body, mind, and soul. Let the teacher, the physician, the home builder, or anyone else sincerely examine it in the light of the problems of human welfare. The Christian ethic, therefore, is not an abstraction; it does not function in a social or a spiritual void. For Jesus, spirit is real; life is real; and Christian obligations are as positively fact as are life and its needs. Consequently he reveals high standards, indicates inescapable obligations, and outlines the objectives of the divine principle, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

And throughout his life the fact of his Messiahship is attested by his spirit and his work. For example, John sent a commission to him to inquire if he was the Messiah. With supreme confidence Jesus said to the messengers: "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."

14

Christ a Gentleman

And being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

—MARK 14:3-6

A GENTLEMAN POSSESSES UNAFFECTED REFINEMENT, OBSERVES THE niceties of life, and is highly sensitive to values and needs. Think for a moment of the gentility of Jesus.

Jesus was offended by crudeness, sham, and hypocrisy. There was no place in his life for veneer of character or conduct. His words cut like a surgeon's lancet and his look is as a flaming sword when he meets the superficial. Hear him speak of foundations of sand. Listen to him as, with righteous indignation, he exclaims: Blind guides; hypocrites; whited sepulchers; dead men's

bones! And yet he uttered not a word of reproof to the Roman soldiers who, in the line of duty, drove the spikes through his hands and feet.

Jesus was highly sensitive to need. Watch him as he moves among the poor of body, mind, and spirit. Observe him as, with keen sensitivity, he feels the presence of the blind, the crippled, the brokenhearted, and the insane. Irrespective of personal hunger, fatigue, or suffering, he never refused to hear or to grant a good request.

Moreover, Jesus appreciated the lovely conditions of life. He spoke of the beauty of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. He loved good homes and visited them. At the wedding at Cana he would not permit his host and hostess to suffer embarrassment. He immortalized thoughtfulness when Mary of Bethany broke the alabaster box of ointment in his honor.

Finally, his attitude toward woman was one of refinement, respect, and honor. He called Herod a fox, and he used the prodigal son, the unjust judge, and other men as bad examples. But he never used a woman as an illustration of crudeness or evil. He never asked a woman an incriminating question, or caused a woman to experience humiliation. Through kindness he let a sinful woman bathe his feet with her tears of penitence; and on another occasion he stooped and wrote on the sand rather than embarrass an accused woman. At the death of Jairus' daughter he drove out the professional mourners, and then took the father and mother into the room so that the little girl would see familiar faces when she awoke; and when he asked her to arise, he spoke to her gently in her native tongue. The last request he

made from the cross was in the interest of his mother. And, on the resurrection morning, with all gentleness he called Mary by her first name.

Jesus was a gentleman.

Idealism in Motherhood

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

—JOHN 19:25-27

A NOBLE REQUEST IS ESSENTIALLY RELIGIOUS.

The last words which Jesus addressed to man from the cross imply a relationship, a graciousness, and an idealism which should never be overlooked.

The mother is both parent and teacher. She bears this relation to the adult as well as to the child, for her influence persists in one's ideals, and in one's chosen work. Her presence, as some of us know, is frequently more powerful when her physical body has been taken away. One is never separated from his mother's heart. Some children enter colleges and universities and become scholars; some enter business and accumulate wealth; some enter military service and fearlessly face death; some enter public life

and are elected to high office; and some become missionaries and go to remote places. But wherever they are and whatever their accomplishments, they are still children at their mother's feet.

A mother's love is idealistic. Woman, at her best, intuitively places right above expediency, hope above logic, and sacrifice above comfort. This altruism, so deeply embodied in motherhood, is said to be a source of morality and ethics. The ebb and flow of tides of civilization seem to be commensurate and coincident with the degree of recognition of such ideals and devotion to them.

A mother's love is often inarticulate. As when Hannah prayed with voiceless lips, a mother's yearning is often deeper than speech, her feeling is frequently purer than reason. The profound longing of a mother's heart is Godlike, for, in purity of motive and in lofty unselfishness, it resembles the divine. As a sublime minor chord, it reminds one of that grand statement:

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

A mother is a refuge. In this refuge no incriminating questions are asked. Society asks them: Who is he? Where does he come from? The business world asks them: What has he? Is he trustworthy? The law asks them: Has he violated the law? What is the evidence? School faculties ask them: Has he ability? Has he character? What does he know? But a mother is all-merciful; her interest is tempered by a boundless love.

A mother's idealism never grows old. Her body grows old. It

becomes weak and stooped; her steps falter; her face becomes wrinkled; her hair becomes white; her heart wears out; her mind may weaken and her thoughts falter. But her heart is the same always toward her children. Like the gates of heaven, as stated in John's Revelation, her heart is "not shut at all by day: and there is no night there."

16

An Epitaph

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

—LUKE 12:16-20

AN EPITAPH ON A MEMORIAL IS USUALLY PREPARED BY A FRIEND. More often than not it is an expression of kindness. It therefore may or may not give a correct appraisal of the deceased. But the inscription which every person etches in the texture of his own soul is an infallible record, as read in the light of an eternal principle.

In this story a man asks Jesus to make his brother divide his

inheritance with him. Christ does not grant the request, for he never employs external force to regulate one's business affairs or to settle legal controversies. He does not dictate with reference to social or economic procedure; nor does he arbitrarily stop even atrocious human conflicts. Jesus does, however, seize the opportunity to teach a profound lesson about life and death. He gives the parable of the rich planter, as a means of showing an attitude which causes the atrophy of a soul.

This wealthy planter surveys his large plantation with its fertile soil and abundant crops. He feels justifiable pride in his accomplishments. He exhibits a commendable spirit of progress when he plans to improve his physical holdings, prevent waste, and conserve what his labor has produced. There is nothing wrong with honest labor, industriousness, thrift, and foresight. One who plants, cultivates, produces, and conserves honorably is working with God in his garden, whether it be on a plantation, in the classroom, or elsewhere.

But what is the trouble with this man? The record is clear. Note how he says, "I, I; my, my." He thought within himself, "my room," "my barns," "my fruits," "my goods," "my time," "my ease," "my food," "my drink," "my merriment." He was so nearsighted that he could see only his physical property and plan only for his own comfort. His conception of life was materialistic and pragmatic. He was so ignorant of his essential nature and needs that he felt that happiness could be had through property and sensuous gratification. He was so restricted in reason and limited in feelings as to be interested primarily in his own physical welfare. He was so inconsiderate of refinement and

genuine values as to send his soul to live in a barn. Selfishness left no place in his life for love or benevolence.

It is a dreadful matter to violate divine law. The planter's soul atrophied. And on the tomb of his tragic and spiritually empty life appears the epitaph which he himself wrote, and which Jesus read—"Thou fool."

17

Divine Peace

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

—JOHN 14:27

THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE REGARD RELIGION AS A MEANS OF ESCAPE from responsibilities and fears. Christ, however, recognizes two kinds of peace.

There is peace such as the world gives. This type may be had through various commendable channels. One thinks of industry and adequate finances, preventive and curative medicine, inventions, and organizations which remove burdens from the backs of vast numbers of people. One also includes such matters as professional success, social position, friendships, and culture. He, moreover, recalls intellectual attainments which have cleared away jungles of ignorance, with their dangers, superstitions, and fears, even in religion.

But no mere human accomplishment can give the permanent and ultimate satisfaction which man requires. The depths of the soul demand something more. Information and feelings are inadequate. The more one learns empirically, the less one seems

to know. No reputable scientist or philosopher now dares be dogmatic about his field. Nothing seems stable. Even civilizations appear to ebb and flow. Paul was correct in his assertion that prophecies shall fail, tongues shall cease, and knowledge shall vanish away. However fine it may be, that peace which the world offers is restricted, partial, and transient.

But Jesus offers peace that is abiding. This does not mean mere complacency. He said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." So long as there are ignorance and evil, he requires that a Christian enter the conflict. As long as large sections of the human family are enslaved, one who is content suffers either from ignorance or a measure of depravity. Besides, who is it that is worthy of the name Christian who wishes complacency? As Browning says, "Was the trial sore? Temptation sharp? Thank God a second time!" Does one suppose that Florence Nightingale sought physical or mental ease? Or General Booth? Or Livingstone? Or Schweitzer? Or Kagawa? Jesus himself had no place to lay his head; he was misunderstood; members of his own family did not believe in him; people of his home town tried to kill him; in the hour of his greatest agony his disciples went to sleep, and in danger they deserted him; finally he was tortured and killed. Then, what is this peace he promises?

Plato shows something of its nature when he states that an unjust man, although he may attain wealth and prestige, and seem to be the justest of men and the most favored of the gods, cannot know it; but that a just man, although he be misunderstood, experience slander and suffer torture, may be happy.

Jesus promises a peace, then, that surpasses all definition, de-

scription, and understanding. It is an inner serenity of the soul. He himself found this divine peace as a consequence of his utter unselfishness, the devotion of his life to a great cause, and his absolute loyalty to his heavenly Father.

18

Jesus and Woman

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

—JOHN 4:21-26

IT IS FREQUENTLY STATED THAT CHRISTIANITY HAS BROUGHT ABOUT emancipation of woman. What was the attitude of Jesus toward her? Let us enumerate some suggestive facts.

Jesus regarded every person as an immortal soul. He thus emphasized the fact of an equality of mankind in the sight of God. For him, this fact holds, irrespective of sex, nationality, or

race, and forbids unfair discrimination. By precept and example he grants a Magna Charta to woman, and establishes the right of every individual to rise to the highest intellectual and spiritual levels of which he or she is capable.

He recognized the needs of woman as well as those of man. He never approved evil; and he never condoned civic or legal discrimination against woman. He heard the plea of the father of an epileptic son; and he answered the prayer of a woman of Canaan in behalf of her daughter. He heard the call of a blind man; and he felt the touch of a poor, ill, superstitious woman. He responded to the distress of a rich ruler; he likewise, as recorded in the most pathetic sentence ever written, had compassion on a widow whose only son was dead.

Jesus also recognized the unselfish spirit of woman. He knew the benevolent heart of the poor widow who dropped all her money into the treasury; and he said of her that she gave "all that she had, even all her living," thus uttering perhaps the highest tribute ever paid one for a generous act, and attributing to woman at her best such idealism as merits our adoration.

Moreover, he recognized the intelligence of woman. He never discredited practical necessities, but he told Martha that her sister, Mary, had chosen that good part which should not be taken away from her. He thus showed that he appreciated Mary's capacity and hunger for food proper to the mind and the soul, and placed his approval on an intellectually and spiritually developed womanhood.

Furthermore, Jesus appreciated the graciousness of woman. He established an everlasting memorial to her who broke the costly box of ointment in his honor. The world is full of the matter of

fact, the practical, the pragmatic—perhaps relatively too full of such. Judas wanted to exchange loveliness for money—a Judas would. But the aroma of Mary's gracious sentiment, bearing the stamp of divine approval, now in a thousand ways pervades the world wherever the gospel is preached.

Finally, Jesus recognized woman's spiritual worth. It was to the woman at the well that Jesus gave the first clear proclamation of his Saviourship. It was also to her that he made that tremendous pronouncement which delocalized, denationalized, and de-racialized God. Said he to her, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

And it must be stated here that no woman who knew Jesus ever said an unkind word about him.

The Challenge of Christianity

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

—MATTHEW 5:43-48

THE WORLD IS FASCINATED BY A GREAT CHALLENGE. IT IS AN HONOR to be confronted by a great opportunity which tests courage and ability. The idea of the tallest skyscraper beckons, and man builds the structure. The North and South Poles, bristling with cold weapons of death, say "Come on," and man goes. The stratosphere says: "Try your feeble wings up here. Come if you dare,

and I will blind your senses and burst your lungs." And men go up there.

Then, why are so many indifferent toward Christianity, and why do some feel that it is fit only for women and children and the sick? It is because they do not recognize it as the most exacting and the worthiest challenge extended them. Let me specify.

Christ proposes the highest personal standard ever conceived. His ideal embodies no compromise of body, mind, or spirit. As those who would climb Everest must be prepared for the arduous conquest, so those who follow Christ must, in so far as is possible, be fit in intelligence, spirituality, and courage. This is his standard: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." He demands complete devotion to truth and right and goodness, wherever and whenever found. Hear him say: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

Moreover, Jesus demands the highest standard of social responsibility. It is a rule of absolute fairness. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Loyalty to his idealism in this imperfect world requires vision, courage, patience, and suffering. Love thine enemy; go the second mile; turn the other cheek; forgive. Let your light so shine upon your good works that others will see them and glorify God. There is no intimation of weakness here. It requires real character and genuine fortitude to do such things.

Finally, Jesus challenges us to establish principles of right, justice, and love in every part of the world. This includes our

homes, our communities, and every other part of the world. It embraces people of every race and color, of every social and political stratum, and of every moral, ethical, and religious belief. It does not imply proselyting for organizations as such. The requirement is that of eliminating disease, ignorance, strife, and suffering of all types; and replacing these evils with intelligence, peace, and good will. It is a challenge worthy of any person at his best.

The Christian Task

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.

—EPHESIANS 6:10-13

THE PROFOUND AND DEVOUT APOSTLE PAUL CAUTIONS AGAINST RESTRICTING religion to trivial matters, when colossal issues are at stake. The struggle now, as then, is with major issues of personality, human relationships, and faith. Let me specify.

By various devices man has been haunted by a low conception of himself. From the days of Vesalius, da Vinci, Copernicus, Newton, Harvey, Darwin, and Wundt, despite vast progress in science and technology, he has been harassed by the thought of his own insignificance. In time and space, he seems negligible;

biologically, he appears to be different from other animals only in degree; and psychologically, some would reduce man to a purely naturalistic status. For example, a popular psychologist writes thus: "Let it be said once and for all that mind is nothing over and above bodily responses." Obviously, there is the colossal task of leading man intelligently to regain high respect for himself, by realizing that, after all, he is essentially a spiritual entity.

Confidence in human relationships must be restored. Distrust, like creeping paralysis, causes dreadful unrest. One speaks of economic recovery, a social Utopia, world peace, and universal brotherhood. These things cannot obtain under the present conditions of selfishness, distrust, and fear. Treaties will continue to become scraps of paper until motives are changed. Coercion will never establish, or guarantee, human justice. Arbitrary external force, civil or religious, will neither make men good nor provide a condition of permanent safety. Jesus was right in teaching that men must first become good in motive. The really great man is he who works to the end of making man's motives Christ-like.

The educational process must become so balanced as to establish deep and correct conceptions about God and man's relation to him. Recently I asked more than two hundred young men—college juniors and seniors—to submit a list of the three most serious problems they now confront in the field of religion. These men came from so-called Christian homes, and, for the most part, belonged to various prominent religious organizations. In the order of frequency, these men replied with the following questions:

1. Is there a God? If so, is he personal, or merely cosmic law?

2. Was Christ divine in any peculiar way?
3. Is affiliation with a religious organization necessary or advisable?

These responses reflect, not atheism, but a general condition of perplexity; and they point toward a basic cause of the confusion and the irregularities now existing in the field of education.

The fight now is with principalities and powers, and with evils in the high places.

The Universal Christ

Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.

Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

—JOHN 9:24-31

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE CHRIST, XENOPHANES, A GREEK PHILOSOPHER, revealed dangers arising from a poor conception of God. Francis Bacon urged the destruction of mental idols of custom and prejudice which, he believed, were substituted for truth. Among the greatest obstacles to spiritual growth are fixed attitudes and misdirected loyalties. For example, familiarity with the Bible frequently prevents intelligent interpretation and illumination; words like love and salvation lose their meaning, and catchpenny phrases and feelings predominate. The young man whose sight was restored discovered, without fully realizing it, two facts.

He learned that religion is not primarily a matter of traditional beliefs and practices. He did not even recognize the man Christ when he saw him; the vital fact of his mercy was enough for him. On the other hand, the very moral, highly scholarly, and rigidly orthodox Pharisees had permitted their devotion to great traditions and a magnificent code of law so to blind them that they regarded Christ as a sinner and finally brought about his death. Jesus profoundly respected civil law, religious organizations, and wholesome customs. Yet, suffering always aroused him, and his ears were never deaf to a cry of distress. For him, the Fatherhood of God and human need were infinitely more significant than opinion or custom.

The young man also learned the profound truth that Jehovah is not a provincial God. When the scales of blindness had fallen from his eyes he said, "If any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." Saul of Tarsus, after a struggle, discovered this fact. Simon Peter reluctantly learned it, and in an inspired moment exclaimed, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh

righteousness, is accepted with him." Jesus never had any question about the universality of God. He never asked about one's nationality, social or financial status, or religious affiliation. He suggested that, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine"—whether it be John, Plato, Marcus Aurelius, or Epictetus.

And thus, for illustration, it was with such knowledge that Socrates risked his life in defense of his country, refused to participate in injustice at peril of death, gave the first and greatest discourse on the immortality of the soul, feared nothing except that he might do an unholy or unrighteous thing, and walked majestically into eternity. And Spinoza, who never uttered an unkind word in the face of abuse and suffering, passionately sought and found the eternal God.

The garden of the Lord is large. Anyone having the will to do the will of God may walk therein and share its loveliness.

God as Father

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

—REVELATION 3:20-21

THIS GREAT VERBAL PICTURE PRESENTS THREE FACTS RELATING TO THE boundless grace of the Lord.

First, it represents the Christian's God as a Friend and Father who is always ready to aid his children. This is the highest conception of deity. Philosophers have offered many superb statements, but one finds it difficult to worship cosmic law, universal reason, or a supreme monad. Great religions other than Christianity name excellent attributes of deity, but in most cases God is designated as one who has to be sought, aroused, and persuaded to respond. Jesus represents, verbally and by his own life, God as a loving Father who is constantly ready to help. His grace is boundless. The parable of the lost coin and the parable of the lost sheep are efforts to teach his fatherhood. The heart of the parable of the prodigal son is not the wayward boy; it is the bro-

kenhearted father. Jesus himself, in a thousand ways, exhibits this divine attitude. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings."

Second, it presents man's obligation to hear and to open the door. Christ will not break down the door. There are few things as strange, as tragic, or as needful as man. But God will not trespass upon the sacred precincts of personality and thus violate man's freedom. There is no evidence that Christ ever aided anyone who was able to help himself, until that person himself first expressed a desire for help. And then Jesus would not pauperize a human life by ignoring its capacity. He usually required an expression of initiative. Hear Christ say: "Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk"; "Stretch forth thy hand"; "Go and show yourselves unto the priests"; "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." Jesus never denied a good request, but he also never forced himself upon any person, weakened anybody's self-respect, or made anyone poor in spirit.

Third, to those who do seek him there is the definite promise of divine communion and fellowship. There are no restrictions of time or place. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." The ground before the Cross is level, and it is an area large enough to accommodate all who come there seeking divine grace and fellowship.

Admission to the Kingdom of Heaven

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

—MATTHEW 18:1-4

IT IS CHARACTERISTIC OF MEN, AND PERHAPS OF SOME WOMEN ALSO, to argue and to express preferences. The disciples disputed about the kingdom of heaven. As people so often do, they thought of it in terms of this world. They even made such distinctions of rank in heaven that a Burke's Peerage would be necessary for the proper arrangement of seatings and processions. Having such erroneous conceptions, they asked Jesus this question: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Knowing their attitude, Jesus placed a little child before them, and, with words that burn like muriatic acid, replied, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The little child, then, gives a clear illustration of requirements for admission.

The child is sincere. He knows nothing about the motives of dishonesty and deception. He does not practice duplicity or hypocrisy. The child's motives are pure. And, thus, free from the weakening and distorting effects of insincerity and sham, the child possesses an attitude which is Godlike in its nature.

Moreover, the child is democratic. He makes no distinctions based on money, social position, or race. Some of us have played with children of other races; and, unashamed, we have wept at the grave of our black mammy. The child has no vanity or unwholesome pride that poisons like a reptile's venom. The little child is unselfish, until he is taught selfishness; and selfishness is a foe of happiness. Furthermore, the little child is receptive. Theodore Roosevelt, in speaking of prejudiced and biased adults, once referred to the infinite capacity of the human mind to resist the reception of information. Dogma, creed, prejudice, and provincialism have brought strife and horror to large sections of the human family, and have kept hosts of people from entering the kingdom of heaven. But a child is eager to learn. His eyes are undimmed; his ears are wide open; his brain is not set. With no impenetrable shell about his mind, he learns and is happy.

Again, through his purity of heart the little child is powerful. His tiny hand can restrain a giant; his cry can annul the decree of a Pharaoh; his smile can transform lives.

Finally, the little child is trustful. He has confidence in those who have him in charge. His life holds no scars of disillusionment. And he has a pure and simple faith in God. As we grow older, some of us, in many respects, will likely pass around the circle through criticism and doubt, and finally come back to the simple faith first learned at our mothers' knees.

The Magnetism of Christ

He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

—JOHN 12:25-32

CHRIST MAKES THE AMAZING CLAIM THAT HE, IF HE BE LIFTED UP before the world, will draw all men unto him. Of what does his magnetic power consist?

A magnet attracts material within its field. Likewise, a great personality affects those about him. Christ's power was tremendous. Scholars marveled at him, even as a youth. Lawyers came to him. Greeks visited him. Scribes and Pharisees hated him, but could not escape him. Homes welcomed him. Children loved him. The afflicted cried unto him, and the distressed turned unto him for comfort. The basis of such attractiveness is obvious—he was the finest personality the world has ever known.

A magnet also rearranges materials affected by it. For example, observe the movements of iron filings or a needle brought near a magnet. Such adjustment occurs when human lives are touched by Perfection. When one has seen the canvas of a master, and when one has walked with Plato and Browning, Shakespeare and Emerson, one's ideals are higher. Let Bach and Beethoven and Wagner speak with their imperishable and universal language, and musical jargon will be heard in the setting it deserves. When one associates with a great personality, one is thereafter never quite the same.

His perfect personality, then, is one explanation of the power of Jesus. Look at him. He was most ambitious, but never compromised or made a mistake. He mingled with all classes, but never stooped or became spotted by sin. He taught, and spoke with such authority that a word from his lips was final. He had enemies, but with a simple statement he sent them away convicted; and with a few pieces of cord he drove money-changers from the Temple. He confronted dangers, but never exhibited fear. In the crises of life and death he never moved in haste, but walked as though earth and time were his, and as if the spangled heavens were in his hand. Yet, little children were attracted to

him; and he wept with friends. With boundless love he prayed for those who were killing him, saying that they did not know what they did.

To know the Master, as he was and as he is, effects a glorious fascination and a marvelous transformation. Is there any wonder, then, that Zacchaeus, when he knew Christ, said: "The half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded any person, I now restore him fourfold." Or that a Roman centurion, as he stood near the cross, exclaimed, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

Self-Mastery

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

—LUKE 9:23-25

A PASTOR ONCE ASKED LYMAN ABBOTT TO ADVISE HIM HOW TO TEACH his people spirituality. The great man replied, "First, be spiritual yourself." It needs to be realized that intelligence, character, and mature spirituality are not gifts. They must be acquired, usually through difficulties.

The Cross is a symbol of suffering. For Jesus it meant physical pain, desertion, betrayal, mockery, and injustice. But he glorified the Cross by giving it a much deeper meaning. For him it meant vision, courage, faith, patience, love, and triumph.

In the first place, Jesus knew life, with all of its conflicting experiences. He recognized the preciousness of the individual man, and he did not discredit man's personal resources. He was unlike

some schools and churches which should erect on their grounds a monument to the lives and minds they have stifled and buried. Jesus did man the honor of regarding him as capable of growth, endurance, and other fine attributes. And so, in this world where man is surrounded by inaction and progress, decay and growth, suffering and joy, death and life, he expects man to become victorious through conflicts. He would not have man become flimsy and feeble in will, weak and unstable in character, or dwarfed in spirituality. Life is too sacred; problems are too real.

He therefore says, "Take up thy cross." It is one's own cross of which he speaks. Is it indifference which is one's cross? Then master that danger. Is it impatience, intolerance, or selfishness? Then control that evil. Is it physical poverty? Endure it; for there is the wealth of intelligence, self-respect, and a good name which is worth more than much fine gold. Is it financial wealth? Control it; do not let it make of you a human puppet. Is it time? Then master time, and with spiritual alchemy transform the passing minutes into living and enduring gold.

Moreover, Jesus says, "Take up thy cross daily. Habits of body and mind are not changed in a day. Character is not acquired instantly. Salvation from unwholesome inclinations is not attained in a moment. Just as some of us who feared tuberculosis took daily breathing exercises and developed powerful lungs, so it is imperative that one take up one's cross continually, and, whatever it may be, gradually master it.

Finally, Jesus shows the direction one should carry one's cross. Some people move in one direction; others in another direction. When they confront difficulties, some go toward bitterness and

despair; some toward vindictiveness or beggary; and others toward resignation to what they call an unkind and unfair world. Jesus, himself setting the example, says, "Follow me"—in faith, in courage, in humility, and in love.

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Shadows

And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

—Acts 5:12-15

THE NATURE AND THE INFLUENCE OF SHADOWS TOO OFTEN REMAIN unappreciated. What are some characteristics and effects of shadows?

First, a shadow is dependent upon a source of light. In complete darkness there are no shadows; in poor light, shadows are faint and difficult to distinguish; in brilliant sunlight, they are distinct and sharply outlined.

Moreover, a shadow is dependent upon an opaque object. There must be some solid medium from which the shadow is projected. A transparent substance casts no shadow.

Moreover, the nature of a shadow, including its color, its shape, and its intensity, is influenced by the background upon which it falls. More often than not, it is observed as a part of the surface on which it appears.

Finally, shadows influence the development of meaning. If all shadows were suddenly removed, the world of visual perceptions would not seem to be the same world which we now see. Landscapes are influenced greatly by the distribution of light and shade. Architects and artists are familiar with its influence, and art galleries are so illuminated that the distribution of light and shade may be controlled. There is a stream in a beautiful Carolina mountain gorge which reminds one of some people; for, due to the variation of shadow effects at different hours of the day, the stream seems to flow downhill at one time and uphill at another time.

In many respects, therefore, shadows are similar to personal influence in the way they give symmetry and beauty, or grotesqueness and ugliness.

There are people who exert little influence because they remain in the darkness of undevelopment. Others have no convictions, and their transparent souls bring no comfort or leadership to those about them. Others, having hearts dense with the unholy desire of selfish ambition, bring anxiety as from a storm, or the peculiar effects of a solar eclipse. But, on the other hand, there are great men and women who, with strength of character, stand in the brilliant sunlight of truth, and transform life, as it were, into the magnificence of a mountain landscape at morning time. Think for a moment of the transformation wrought by those in art, literature, music, science, statesmanship, education, and re-

ligion, and of the thousands of unheralded souls who, honest and unselfish, make life worth while.

These early disciples were great spirits upon whom the glittering rays of God's love fell, and the shadows they cast have become so lengthened with the centuries that they touch our lives. They were so attractive and wholesome, as they went about doing good, that many people had such confidence in them as to cause them to bring forth the sick and lay them on beds, "that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them."

Love to the Uttermost

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world,
but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also
sent them into the world.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might
be sanctified through the truth.

—JOHN 17:15-19

A GREAT LOVE COMMANDS RESPECT AND ADDS CHARM AND BEAUTY TO life. How much richer the world is on account of the love of Abraham and Sarah, Jonathan and David, Abélard and Héloïse, Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, and a host of other men and women who have devoted their lives to a great love.

At the close of his ministry Jesus gave evidence of his intelligent, comprehensive, persistent, and trustful love for his disciples. The record says that, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

The disciples were his own. He called them his children. He adopted them as a teacher adopts his students and calls them "My boys," whether they remain in the classroom or go to widely

separated parts of the world. Jesus recognized in them intellectual and ethical capacity. He believed in them. He educated them through personal touch and example, private conversation and public lectures, and in the unmatched laboratory of human suffering and need.

Moreover, the disciples were in the world, and Jesus wanted them to stay in the world. The love of God is not an abstraction, nor does it operate in a vacuum. It is concerned with people in a realistic world. Jesus found his disciples in the world, every one of them an alert and busy man. The Lord never selects a loafer. Try to recall one instance, from Abraham to the present time, where God called an indolent man to a great task. These disciples did not come from the seclusion of the Temple, nor from a hermit's cave. They were laborers, fishermen, a tax collector—men associated with industry, government, people. Jesus kept them in the world, and sent them into the world.

Love does not pauperize life by imposing restrictions that stifle initiative. Some parents, through misdirected love, commit the tragedy of never permitting their children to accept responsibility. Even the eagle tears up her nest that her young may learn to fly. Jesus did not want his disciples to become ascetics or hermits. He wanted them to use their powers. They were to go where people were. They were to see suffering and need, ignorance and strife, hate and injustice, intemperance and waste, and devote their lives to the elimination of these evils.

And Jesus loved them to the end. He had boundless patience with them. His disciples misunderstood him. They became impatient. They quarreled among themselves, and were selfish and ignorant enough to want personal precedence in heaven. Peter

became a coward at the taunt of a servant girl. Thomas doubted. Judas betrayed him. During the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, the bitterest hour of his life, the disciples with him went to sleep. But despite all such weaknesses and errors, he loved them to the uttermost.

Jesus is the embodiment or incarnation of perfect love.

Unseen Things

For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God.

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

—II CORINTHIANS 4:15-18

PLATO SAYS SOMEWHERE THAT A HALF-TRUTH IS THE WORST FORM OF falsehood. The statement is correct, for a misrepresentation coated with truth is attractive, plausible, and therefore to most people readily acceptable and dangerous. One of the most prevalent modes of deception is that practiced by those who insist that only the seen, the tangible, and "cash value" are the real. Under such a claim, supported by an overworked logic, have appeared forms of sophistry, certain tendencies in psychology and philosophy, types of obnoxious literary realism, and the doctrine of force or might in business, government, and the professions.

Paul, however, says that the things which are not seen are the eternal. What does he mean?

First, the unseen things are the real things. He says that the things which are seen are not the real entities. He suggests that truth cannot be reduced to observable phenomena. Objects are too variable; sensory experience is too restricted, the mind too limited; and manifestations must not be mistaken for the ultimate. For example, one may describe an oak in minute detail, but the principle which directs its growth and the substance which forms the tangible object have not been seen. One sees by light, but no one has seen light. One easily locates electrical transmission lines, but electrical energy as such has not been observed.

Moreover, the unseen things are the controlling things. For example, scientists speak of chemical affinity, dynamics, and gravitation. The atom has been pictured as a miniature universe, and the heavens have been charted. The microcosm and the macrocosm seem to move with uncanny precision. But all are controlled by some great unseen hand, call it what you will. Speaking of appearances, Eddington impressively states that "matter and all else that is in the physical world have been reduced to a shadowy symbolism."

Furthermore, the unseen is the abiding. Rivers flow, mountains are leveled to piedmont areas and plains; but gravitation remains. Generations of plants and animals come and go; but life persists. A thousand conceptions of right and justice appear; but principles of right and justice abide.

Finally, the unseen things are the spiritually satisfying things. A lower animal may live by bread alone; a man cannot do so.

With eternity planted in his heart, man is not satisfied with appearances. Food satisfies the body, color satisfies the eye, sound satisfies the ear, information satisfies the intelligence; but the divine hunger of the soul can be allayed only by faith in the existence of truth as the foundation of things temporal.

Values of Worship

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

—Acts 9:3-6

WORSHIP DOES NOT CONSIST IN THE OBSERVANCE OF RITUAL OR BELIEF in articles of faith. As commendable and helpful as great opinions and modes of expression may be, if one goes only to dogmas, creeds, traditions, theology, or other creations of the mind to discover truth, he will find them as empty as the tomb. Worship is essentially an experience with God, which is likely to produce invaluable effects. When Saul of Tarsus became aware of the Eternal, the worshipful experience transformed him from priest to apostle. His life is therefore an illustration of the values of worship.

Worship reveals a great and definite objective. Saul was so fascinated by him whom he heard actually for the first time, that prisons, physical torture, and death no longer held terror for him. We now move on a stormy sea raging with icy gales, crosscurrents, and devastating breakers; and our minds tend to break under the strain of such mental discord. Even a casual student of abnormal psychology may observe numerous types of wreckage of mind and personality. Worship helps unify and orient life by enabling one to experience genuine manifestations of truth. As Plato states, "The intelligence . . . rejoices at beholding reality, and . . . is replenished and made glad."

Moreover, worship enables one to gain a correct conception of values. The controversy over values is now as widespread as it is disconcerting. Custom seems to offer one type of values; religion presents another type; while science disclaims any interest in values. One is consequently sometimes made to feel that the absolute is after all merely opinion which itself is as diverse and unstable as time and place permit. One is reminded of Eddington's reference to the weakness of opinion, in which he says that natural law, instead of being ultimate, cannot even tackle the multiplication table singlehanded. But when Saul experienced the Divine Presence there was no longer any question about opinion. He was changed from a religious dogmatist to an apostle of Truth. Likewise, when anyone actually worships he lays aside the shackles of medieval or modern traditionalism and dogma, and he no longer bows himself in worship before any man, opinion, or form of temporal power.

Finally, worship gives a clear conception of responsibility. No intelligent person wishes the end product of his life to be a failure.

The greatest evil in the world is the waste of opportunity and personality. Such tragedy need not occur. Isaiah heard the voice of Almighty God, said "Send me," and became a great prophet. Moses experienced Jehovah at the burning bush, and then became a great leader. Saul met Christ, and consequently became a flaming evangel who never again doubted his mission. Likewise, Carey, Yates, Grenfell, Schweitzer, and Kagawa were made great by worship.

If and when we as individuals, or as a nation, know the truth, we shall be free.

The Master Teacher

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

—JOHN 3:1-2

JESUS OF NAZARETH IS THE MASTER TEACHER OF ALL AGES. HE TAUGHT the truth to men in such a way that the truth made them free. Through his infinite wisdom, his all-inclusive love for people, his lucid teaching, and his truth-imparting personality, Jesus healed men of the sleeping sickness of sin, the coma of ignorance, and the delirium of selfishness. He opened the eyes of their inner understandings and showed them the meaning of the life of God in the life of man.

Jesus possessed infinite wisdom. He knew what God is like, and he bore witness of his Father. He knew what was in man, and revealed to men the sacredness and worth of their own lives in the sight of God. Jesus portrayed God as a creative Father, working in the world in the processes of healing, reconciliation, and judgment. Jesus also, as a Son of God, knew that labor is a

divine exercise; he was able to use his own hands, and understanding; and he led men into the godly pursuit of honest labor in a great cause. Jesus was thoroughly acquainted with the word and the spirit of the Scriptures of his day. He understood the social, political, and religious currents and eddies of thought that often threatened to engulf him. The beauteous array of nature, the sordid glumness of the lowest strata of human life, and the quiet beauty of the pure in heart all were common sights to the eye of Jesus. Jesus had eyes and could see.

Jesus, moreover, excelled all other teachers in wisdom because he loved people for their own sakes. It is no wonder that the Greeks sought him. Here was a man different from their philosophers, because he, out of his love for God, possessed an all-inclusive love for men, regardless of race, creed, possession or position. He lifted up, in himself, the love of God for men, and men were drawn unto him. Good homes welcomed him, hardened sinners bowed at his feet with adoring petitions for mercy, and confused scholars sought new light from him as to the meaning of life. The compassion of Jesus for people was an inner light. That inner light enabled him to see remorse and worth where others saw only the weakness, the sin, the failure, and the debris of human lives. Consequently, Zacchaeus was transformed, Lazarus had a friend in time of great need, the Samaritan woman's hunger and thirst for righteousness was appeased, and Nicodemus called Jesus a teacher sent from God.

Jesus, furthermore, taught as one having authority because he had such a profound grasp of the truth that he could state it simply and clearly. The child or the sinner could understand his meaning. He was a master teacher because he could put the

deepest thoughts of the human mind and the most subtle movements of the human soul into simple words that anyone could understand. He could express the truth in the language of the person who needed it. He was not afraid to meet any person on his own level with the gospel. He spoke to Martha and Mary about housekeeping, to Peter about fishing, to the socially elite about a banquet, to Thomas about scars, and to Nicodemus about intellectual and spiritual births.

But Jesus was the master teacher because he expressed the perfect truth through his own perfect personality. Jesus was never guilty of warping the minds of his students with error. He could therefore say to his Father in prayer: "I pray for . . . them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." The Greeks had taught the idea of God; the Scribes and Pharisees had taught the so-called laws of God. Jesus revealed God in himself. He did not say, "I teach the truth"; he said, "I am the truth," and "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

The world sat in a great darkness; in Jesus, however, it beheld a great awakening light, a teacher full of graciousness and truth. Our primary need is that we shall see the Master Teacher as he is.

Mental Perversion

And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

—MARK 8:15-18

THERE ARE FIVE HUMAN SKULLS IN MY OFFICE WHICH, IT MAY BE said, represent that number of different types of people. One skull is that of a hydrocephalic. A disease, causing excessive secretion of cerebrospinal fluid, attacked this person and affected his brain and mind in a way which doomed him to bodily abnormality and hopeless idiocy. Another skull is that of a microcephalic. This skull became prematurely ossified, and thus not only failed to develop to normal size, but also prevented full cerebral growth. As a consequence, this man's mind did not exceed that of an imbecile. The third skull is that of a woman who belonged to an African tribe. She was the victim of the laws of

fashion of her people, for during infancy her head was so bound that it became an elongated, melon-shaped structure. Still another skull is trilobed. This man, in early childhood, was selected to become a priest, and the religious beliefs of his sect demanded that his head should grow into the peculiar trilobite shape. Alongside these abnormal skulls rests one of normal size and shape.

It is in this manner that human minds become weakened, restricted, warped, perverted and fixed, or developed to rich maturity. There are thousands of people who, through the inroads of disease, become mentally enfeebled. They are, perhaps as often as not, the innocent victims of an inexorable heredity or a vicious acquired malady. There are countless thousands of other people whose minds become prematurely fixed in mediocrity. The social stratum into which they are born and in which they are reared so binds them in various ways that they become fixed on the level of immature thought. Their ideas and their interests scarcely exceed those of a child. As Albert Pike says, they rarely rise above the ox or the machine beside which they labor. Tragically and unwittingly, their capacity for normal development becomes lost.

Moreover, one finds everywhere people whose minds are perverted by superficial claims and artificial objectives. They may be surrounded by financial and social abundance, yet they become the slaves of restricting customs, traditions, fashions, and ideologies. Their ideals and ambitions conform to those of their stratum. They continue therefore to think as their particular mental environment has decreed. Their minds become as impervious to new ideas as a steel jacket is impenetrable by a lead projectile. They often reveal an infinite capacity to resist the reception of

new modes of truth. This condition obtains in sectarian as well as secular affairs. Those shaped by the molds of religious beliefs and practices may be the most irreceptive type, for their thought is directed by established emotionalism as well as modes of reasoning. Christ warns against both sectarian and secular dangers. "Beware," he says, "of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod."

No one ever placed more emphasis upon intellectual growth than did Christ. He devoted his life in large measure to the removal of enslaving conditions. He never refused a plea to help the afflicted, never avoided an opportunity to bring freedom to enshackled minds, never omitted a plea for normal human growth in body, mind, and soul. At the very center of the Christian commission is to be found the right and the obligation of every human being to grow "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." He that hath eyes to see, let him see. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The Salvation of Zacchaeus

And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

And he sought to see Jesus, who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.

And he made haste, and came down; and received him joyfully.

And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

—LUKE 19:1-8

LIFE IS INESCAPABLY REALISTIC. SOCIETY CONSISTS OF PEOPLE OF diverse training, interests, and ideals. Countless beliefs, customs, and organizations make accepted claims upon loyalties and prac-

tices. One breaks established habits and escapes from common social currents only with difficulty and suffering. Zacchaeus, a man of ability, wealth, and position, was a victim of the social mores of his country and found himself surrounded by an irrational crowd of his people. But, activated by a moment's higher insight, he ignored public opinion, took a radical step, and discovered spiritual freedom. What caused his transformation?

One of the causes of Zacchaeus' transformation was the exerting of personal effort. He was surrounded by a multitude of people who obscured his view physically, mentally, and spiritually. This seething crowd pulsed with physical force, morbid curiosity, bitter prejudice, blinding selfishness, and arrogant officiousness. This little man, therefore, was to the crowd only a despised tax collector, a sinner of no particular worth, and perhaps outside the pale of social responsibility and spiritual help. But Zacchaeus, intellectually curious and spiritually famished, hungered and thirsted for a view of the Master; he consequently did what he could, with the resources he had, to look upon the Christ. Impulsive and enlightened initiative impelled him to surmount obstacles which obstructed his view. He climbed a sycamore tree.

Then, Jesus saw him. Jesus disregarded the crowd and fastened his eye on the individual. He looked upon Zacchaeus, recognized his naïve but sincere desire, and requested him to come down. The Master never ignored a needy suppliant, nor was he ever unprepared to help one. John correctly stated the attitude of Jesus thus: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." It was in this way that Jesus met the Roman centurion, the timid afflicted woman who touched

the hem of his garment, the Gadarene lunatic, the pleading lepers, the man with the withered hand, the cripple by the pool, the sinful woman at the well, the disciple who had denied knowing him, and the little children who trusted him. It was natural, then, that he should see Zacchaeus and bring a blessing to him. He had eyes that upon seeing could see.

Jesus transformed Zacchaeus when he had been in fellowship with him but a short while. He did something through kindness which the others present could not do with their superficial curiosity, their exaggerated self-righteousness, and their illusory self-security. They condemned Zacchaeus as a sinner; they reflected their own pallid characters by murmuring against Jesus for befriending Zacchaeus. But Jesus loved him, and gave him a new grip on himself and a new outlook on life. No acid criticism could affect Jesus, and no shackle of custom could restrain him in the presence of expressed, sincere desire for relief, whether it was in a home, on a highway, in the temple, or among the tombs. Through the radiant dynamic of such a gracious personality Zacchaeus became a different man. He was no longer selfish and grasping: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor." Repentant, he did not evade restitution: "If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Jesus created within Zacchaeus that well of sympathy and humility that springs up into eternal life, and so graciousness and productivity now prevailed in the life of Zacchaeus.

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Birthdays

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

—JOHN 3:1-5

CHRIST FREQUENTLY USED PARABLES, SIMILES, AND METAPHORS IN teaching great truths. He never made a mystery of God, life, and religion. He often used astonishingly simple language and graphic illustrations in discussions of profound truths. Christ thus spoke to Nicodemus, a scholar, a teacher, and a member of a distinguished circle in Jerusalem, in the language that any man

could be expected to understand. Nicodemus wished to know how a man can enter the Kingdom of God, and Christ specified two conditions.

The Master told Nicodemus that one must be born of water. Man must use the tangible means of maintaining, cleansing, and improving his life. Water is essential to life. The cells and gross structures of a living organism are constantly bathed and fed with water, and without water the organism will eventually perish. Man's body, mind, and soul must be thus maintained through the substances essential to them. Moreover, water is a symbol of cleanliness. With it the body is cleansed, externally and internally, of waste and impurities, just as the atmosphere, the countryside, and cities are freed of dust, waste, and pollution. Through its beneficent use, health, strength, and beauty are revived and promoted. Nicodemus was expected, then, to understand that baptism with water is emblematical of purifying one's life, for, as it is conducive to health and beauty of the body, so it should, symbolically, cleanse mind and soul of noxious evils and promote growth and charm.

Thus, Christ explained that one may be reborn, as it were, by the use of beneficent agencies available to him. Birth is a change of environment which offers greater opportunities. Some of us had birthdays when we read the winged words of Homer, the idealistic philosophy of Plato, the revealing gospel of John. Some of us entered into a new world when we heard the symphonies of Mendelssohn and Beethoven, and discovered the poetry of the psalmist. Some of us were reborn when we first held our first child in our arms. Some of us had another birthday when we removed shackles from a student's imprisoned mind, fed a desti-

tute beggar, or enabled a crippled child to walk. Through the use of such available means, Christ said, we find one means of entering the Kingdom.

But Christ specified a condition of birth which transcended accomplishments of body and mind. He declared that there must be a spiritual birth which includes a clear conception of eternal verities and a deep loyalty to truth. This transformation of insights, ideals, motivations, and objectives of life occurs through experience with God. Christ knew that Nicodemus was familiar with literature, music, philosophy, and theology; but this in itself was not sufficient. He informed Nicodemus that the spiritual birth occurs when God's Spirit enters the spirit of man. This teacher needed that keystone of wisdom—that transforming personal knowledge of the intrinsic worth of man, the near and loving care of God, and the obligation to lose one's life in devotion to God and man. Such growth effects a spiritual birth into the Kingdom of God. Christ was thus born, and he knew.

The Small Becomes Large

The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time.

—ISAIAH 60:19-22

A DISTINGUISHED INDUSTRIALIST MADE THIS STATEMENT TO AN OBSCURE teacher in a Christian college: "The cloth we make wears out, and the marble we finish will eventually disintegrate; the ideal you plant in a human mind lives eternally." But the average person seldom reflects upon the law of increasing returns in the realm of mind and spirit. Isaiah here proclaims the growing influence of an unheralded idea, and of an apparently incidental deed when it is in harmony with the law of the eternal God.

The mother of the infant Moses was faithful to the trust committed to her, not suspecting that she was training one who would become a peerless statesman and religious leader. The acacia bush at Horeb was only a species of tree, but its flaming beauty awakened Moses to an awareness of the presence of God and the holiness of his creation. The shepherd boy came to Saul's army to bring food to his brothers; but he used, not heavy armor, but a sling and pebble to bring victory and relief to Israel. Gideon's men drank water in an alert manner and showed themselves worthy of battle against apparently overwhelming forces. A poor widow cast two trivial coins into the treasury, unaware that Christ saw her and that her act would bring forth the Master's praise and set the high standard of Christian benevolence. Christ told the blind man to go wash in the pool of Siloam, and obedience to that simple request brought relief to the afflicted man. The Samaritan, through unassumed compassion, helped a wounded man, never suspecting that he would be immortalized as a good neighbor and an example of how one may find eternal life. Paul had a dream, an incidental occurrence which led him to carry the gospel into classical Greece and thus to European civilization.

All about us may be found examples of the abundant fruitfulness of a casual word and an unostentatious deed. An incidental remark by a college professor inspired a high-school student to graduate from college and a great law school, and then enter upon a distinguished career as a jurist. A boy who saw his unlettered mother sign her name with a mark became the great "educational governor" of his state. A minister reports that only one little boy was converted during a series of meetings, but that boy became an internationally known preacher. A group of students

sought shelter in a haystack, and there they started the foreign missionary movement in America. A colored boy, an ex-slave, swept a classroom well that he might be admitted to the school; that youth founded one of the greatest schools for Negroes in the world, and became a foremost citizen of the United States. On a campus in the South is a log cabin in which a noble young woman began a school now grown into a beautiful institution worth many millions of dollars, having a large faculty, and bringing enlightenment to thousands of eager youth.

In God's sight and under his law there is no insignificant life and no unimportant deed. In God's great order and in his good time the small may become vastly great. Not infrequently the doors of destiny swing open on exceedingly small hinges.

The Wages of Sin

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me.

—PSALM 51:1-3

JESUS RECOGNIZED THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL IN THE WORLD. HE REGARDED the sinner as one who misses the high mark of the glory of God and consequently becomes to some extent a warped and enslaved personality and contaminating influence.

Sin degrades the sinner. As Plato says, evil gradually seeps into a life and grows until it may finally become a furious monster which turns upon its keeper and torments him. As Homer forcefully describes and as Milton and Spenser show, sin effects a Circean transformation of man from the human form to that of a swinish brute. Sin breeds disease and fosters habits which enfeeble and often destroy the body. It nurtures anxieties and fears which retard, weaken, shackle, and break the mind. It obscures ideals, lashes conscience, and drives away peace and happiness. For the sinner the wages of sin is retardation of development, blighting of hopes, and destruction of serenity.

Moreover, the effects of sin persist. An apparently trivial sin, like a minor infection in one's body, often grows until it infests one's life. The bacilli of evil, like an obnoxious leaven, may multiply until they pollute a man's thought and conduct. Once an evil occurs, it launches a stream of forces beyond the sinner's control. Repentance may bring forgiveness, but it does not forestall the effects of sin. David repented in sackcloth and ashes; yet Uriah was dead, the sword of God's moral law was upon the king's household, and David never ceased to feel the barbs of evil in his own mind, never escaped the burdens of tragedy in his family, and never became free from the insubordination of his officers. With unspeakable remorse, Judas brought the silver back to the priests, but he did not save himself or him whom he had betrayed. Christ forgave the thief on the cross beside him, but the thief was not free from the effects of his lawlessness.

Furthermore, the fruits of sin multiply indefinitely. A man's sin is not restricted to himself, nor do its effects die with him. The influence of a wasted, a dishonest, an intemperate, or an immoral life moves on, frequently with increasing momentum in a widening circle, through many years and generations. David's children and the nation of which he was king tasted for long centuries the bitter fruits of the evil seed which he planted. One day a Revolutionary War soldier named Kallikak sinned. From his sordid act have come almost five hundred human descendants, the majority of whom are listed as criminal, immoral, pauper, feeble-minded, insane; and the end of this lurid trail is yet nowhere near.

"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. . . . Walk not thou in the way with them."

No Easy Road

And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house.

And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

—LUKE 9:57-62

NOTHING GREAT IS EASY. THOSE WHO MINIMIZE THE SEVERITY OF THE Christian way are unaware of Christ's exacting standards in a hostile world. However glorious and commanding it may be, the lofty idealism of the Master is attained only through meeting grave difficulties. The Scripture here reveals two of Christ's answers to thoughtless and impulsive people.

Christ told the men that he himself was enduring difficulties, and he showed them the hardships they would encounter in the great adventure with him. Christ knew what privation meant, for he gave up his home, his family discounted his mission, his neighbors attempted to kill him, religious leaders and public servants hated him, and the Gadarenes preferred swine to him. The multitude followed him selfishly, his disciples deserted him in danger, an unjust judge refused him protection, soldiers cast dice for his robe, and he died between two criminals.

Devout Christians have paid in the coin of suffering for their fellowship with Christ. Tradition holds that Peter was crucified. John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded. Stephen was stoned to death, and Paul suffered the lash and the headsman's ax. Other Christians were driven to the catacombs, thrown into the arena, lighted as human torches. Bunyan, Tyndale, Latimer, Knox, and a host of others, in their fellowship with Christ, found suffering in their conquest of an ignorant, wicked, and cruel world.

Modes of torture may have changed, but anyone who dares to be definitely Christian today will suffer some form of crucifixion. If he escapes a concentration camp, he will be maligned, scoffed at, or ostracized. Moreover, who dares say that it is easy to know what is right, to do what is right, to return good for evil, to bless them who practice selfishness and abuse? What beds of ease can a Christian now find in a subterranean shelter? What pleasure can he have from the alkaline taste of the ashes falling in the world conflagration? From the point of view of physical torture and mental agony, the road a true Christian must travel is indeed the *via dolorosa*.

Christ also made it plain that his way requires exacting and uncompromising loyalty. He frowned upon dual loyalties, lax efforts, and wasteful procrastination. He pointed out that a man having divided motives is not fit for leadership in the Kingdom of God. His criterion of admission was all or none. He knew the ill effects of divergent interests, and he understood the handicaps of personal anxieties, cares, and fears about trivial affairs. He therefore told his disciples not to become unduly concerned about money, clothing, food, what they should say during a crisis, or bodily suffering. Paul knew what Christ meant by conflicting claims when he wrote: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Psychiatrists today understand what Christ meant when they see men and women who try to serve two masters—God and mammon, enlightenment and ignorance, purity and impurity—become broken in mind. The human temple cannot withstand such irreconcilable inner urges. So, with trenchant hyperbole, the Master stated the imperative need of singleness of purpose when he said, "Let the dead bury their dead," and "Who is my mother?" And his own unwavering steadfastness and complete serenity show forth his singleness of purpose.

A Youth Movement

Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

—MARK 1:16-17

YOUTH, ARISING IN EACH NEW GENERATION, IS THE WORLD'S FOUNTAIN-source of human advancement. Jesus inaugurated the most fruitful youth movement that man has witnessed; for he founded a worthy, constructive, growing, and permanent enterprise. How did he do this?

He selected twelve young men between the approximate ages of eighteen and thirty. They had time, resiliency, stamina, and capacity. They were not bound by the routine responsibilities of homes and organizations. They were not restricted by the fixed prejudices and provincial loyalties so common to old age. None was hindered by priestly or political ties or aspirations. Their capacity for God had not been crystallized. They were teachable; they were able to see the issues of life; they were able to hear the still, sad music of humanity; they were able to feel indignation and kindness; and they were able to recognize truth and submit

themselves to its obligations. They were able, therefore, to grow in wisdom concerning God and man.

Jesus required three things of these young men. First, they must grow intellectually. He knew that ignorance, the foul sire of blunder and a legion of Hydra-headed monsters, restrains the growth of the Kingdom of God. Hence, from the outset he lectured to them, showed them actual conditions of life, revealed to them relative values, warned them about personal obstacles and suffering, and set before them the perfect example of thought and conduct. At times he became impatient at their dullness and said: "Do ye not remember?" "How is it that ye do not understand?" "How long shall I suffer you?" "Are ye also yet without understanding?" Yet, to the end he taught them of the reality of God; he showed them how sacred their own lives were; and he assured them of his own eternal presence in the work they had to do.

Again, Jesus required that they be boldly adventurous. Numerous times he said: "Be not afraid." "Why are ye so fearful?" He urged that they should not be afraid in the presence of storms, illness, death, and great personal danger. He regarded cowardice as evil, and once, when Peter advised him to evade danger, he told him that he talked as of the devil. He thus branded intellectual and moral cowardice, whether of an individual or an organization, as unchristian and contemptible. He charged his followers to lay aside all impediments and to run with steadfastness the course that he himself had blazed for them.

Moreover, Jesus requested faith. He required the complete confidence of his followers in this new enterprise. He offered them no well-organized institution, no economic guarantee, no personal comforts, no freedom from critics and enemies, and no official re-

wards. He asked them to leave their homes, parents, friends, and work, and join him in launching a movement that would have its consummation in Eternity. He pointed them to the simple deeds of life; he reminded them of grass, lilies, foxes, children, distracted people, and God. But he promised them that by faith they could move mountains. It was thus by faith that they were to follow him, touch the infinite resources of God's reservoir of truth, and become invincible. The forces of evil could not hold out against such an adventurous faith.

Jesus also demanded that these young men make practical applications of spiritual laws. Jesus said of himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." This program carried him to the very center of the needs of men and women, and it required that his disciples follow him in relieving distress, regardless of time, place, and circumstances. Jesus called out the best in these young adventurers when he told them they were chosen not to be theological pulpiteers, abstract theorizers, and obscure speculators. They were to be full-grown ministers of truth for confused minds, balm for broken bodies, and hope for disheartened men. Jesus always kept his hand on the pulse of human need. He knew that such a ministry leads one into the presence of the Eternal.

If Thou Knewest

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

—JOHN 4:7-10

AN ANCIENT PAGAN SAGE SAID THAT KNOWLEDGE IS VIRTUE. INDEED, the majority of those who do evil are the victims of some form of ignorance, for few men deliberately do a wrong. If, therefore, the veil of obscurity were removed from his intellect, man would choose the right rather than the wrong modes of life. Jesus said that truth would make man free. The woman at the well represents one who has not been transformed by truth, and who has therefore not been awakened to the truth about self, about God, and about the actual conditions of human life.

This Samaritan woman did not appreciate the fact that Jacob's well was hallowed by a thousand years of Hebrew history. A great cloud of witnesses—men of vision who had labored and fought for home and freedom and who had borne the humiliation of defeat—encompassed her. Had she known, the great treasures of social rights and religious freedom, gained through the faith, courage, toil, and suffering of her forefathers, would have inspired her. Moreover, she did not realize that the well was a memorial to civic effort and progress. If she had realized that Jacob and others had undertaken to meet the needs of men and women, herds and flocks, she would have felt the need to contribute to the social improvement of her community. She would have observed the hungry, the sick, the mentally frustrated, and endeavored to remove such barriers to social righteousness.

In her blindness, the woman was racially prejudiced. If, however, she had known the essential nature and worth of an individual human life, she, like the good Samaritan, would have made no primary distinction between Jew and Samaritan. For, to those who know a man as an immortal soul, instead of appraising him in terms of color, social status, and reputation only, racial barriers vanish as fog fades before the sun.

The woman was furthermore blinded by religious provincialism. For her, God was a local, a tribal god, to be worshiped only at a specified place. If she had only known the essence of the religion of Jesus she would have understood that God is a Spirit and that those who worship him must do so in spirit and in truth, rather than in terms of place, formality, or organization. Had she thus known, her God would have been a God, not of Jew or

Gentile, Greek or barbarian, but of all people, irrespective of race, nationality, or creed.

Moreover, she did not know the man with whom she talked. But, as she conversed with Christ, the light began to appear, and she began to see Jesus as the Messiah. Then she hurried away to tell others, according to her ability, of her discovery and to bring them to know the Master.

Quantity and Quality

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet.

—PSALM 8:3-6

WE SOMETIMES SEE A STUDENT WHO, HAVING BEEN ADMITTED TO A fraternity or elected to an office, appears to feel confident that value and wisdom will perish with him. He interprets the whole universe in terms of himself. He proclaims that he is not a puny part, but the axis of creation. But, if he has a growing mind, the psalmist's searching question, "What is man?" inevitably arises.

As a child, one is anthropocentric. He thinks of man as the center of a small universe. He regards the earth as the primary sphere around which all other heavenly bodies pass. The sun, for illustration, was created to provide man with light and warmth by day, while the moon and stars were made to give man light

and beauty by night. Moreover, all plants and animals exist, directly or indirectly, for the support and comfort of man. But when the dawn of a greater knowledge comes, its brilliant light compels the growing student to readjust his mental vision. He discovers that the earth is only one small planet of one solar system amid millions times millions of stellar systems. Astronomers tell him that, if grains of sand represent the stars, the number of grains of sand, as large as the number of the stars, "spread over England would make a layer several hundred yards in depth." Astronomers also reveal to him something of the immensity of space. Whereas light travels around the earth in one seventh of a second, it travels fifty years in passing from the North Star to the earth; and it would travel six billion years before it encompassed the universe.

The thoughtful student, moreover, becomes informed about the immensity of time. He finds that scientists reckon time in terms of billions times billions of years. They discuss young, old, and dead stars. They report that the sun is more than seven million million years old, whereas the earth is only a child of about two thousand million years. Furthermore, life has existed on this planet only some sixty million years. Man appeared comparatively recently—perhaps a mere hundred and fifty thousand years ago. The student thus learns that he is barely an atom and a split second in incredibly enormous space and time. He is told that all things—atoms, stars, men—decay and pass into timeless, eternal night. If a man thinks of himself merely in terms of the space, time, and matter which he as an individual in some measure controls with his own puny powers, he will feel himself

dwindling into utter insignificance and crying out, with Voltaire, that men are

Tormented atoms in a bed of mud,
Devoured by death, a mockery of fate. . . .
This world, this theater of pride and wrong,
Swarms with sick fools who talk of happiness.

But the psalmist writes in no such mood of despair. The shepherd-poet refers to the awe-inspiring immensity of the universe only in order to emphasize the fact that God does not value man in terms of how much he has, how much he does, or how long he lives. As man does not value the mountain above the vein of gold, the shell above the pearl, the silt above the diamond, so God does not value the temporal things of life above the eternal ideas of life.

The psalmist proclaims the fact of the Eternal God whose glory transcends the grandeur of the heavens. Scientists who reveal the nature of the universe, like the poet, bow humbly before the Eternal. Darwin, for example, asserts that "this grand sequence of events the mind refuses to accept as the result of blind chance. The understanding revolts from such a conclusion." Kepler, as he ponders astronomical formulas, reverently exclaims, "Almighty God, these are thy thoughts I am thinking after thee."

The poet also says that God is a personal God who is mindful of the individual man and visits him. He proclaims, furthermore, that God created man a little lower than the angels, and placed upon him a divine crown of glory and honor. He gave man a nobility of soul and a sufficient degree of intelligence to be, not the owner, but the wise custodian of the creative providences of

God's hands. He reveals thus that God does not measure man's worth in terms of the shifting quantities of man's hungers for food, possessions, power, and recognition, but in terms of the eternal qualities of man's passion for truth, beauty, and righteousness, and his willingness to submit himself humbly to his Sovereign. The individual human being is, in these respects, greater than any physical thing, whether atom or universe. The star, the mountain, and the violin may outlast man's body, but man discovers the star, appreciates the beauty of the mountain, and constructs the instrument from which he brings inimitably beautiful strains of music of his own creation.

Christian Witnessing

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

—ROMANS 12:1-2

THE APOSTLE PAUL HAD BEEN BEFORE THE BAR OF ROMAN LAW AND had heard accusations and pleas. He here insists that Christians should be worthy and convincing witnesses for Christ. He knew the frailty, confusion, and error of religious leaders who were superficial. He regarded them as unsatisfactory defenders of the high standard of perfection raised by Christ. In view of their vast obligations and superb privileges, Paul pleaded for effective witnessing.

Paul says that a Christian should offer infallible proof. His evidence should be true, incontrovertible, convincing, and thus should be able to withstand the caustic cross-examination of uninformed, skeptical, prejudiced, or scholarly jurists. Paul knew that proof of the fatherhood of God, the divinity of Christ, and the intrinsic worth of man does not consist of mere opinions, dog-

matic claims, vague sentiments, soothing platitudes, established rituals, unexamined creeds, official duties, or membership in organizations. He was convinced that, in this incomparable court, valid evidence about these vital considerations must be stated in the exacting and irrefutable terms of a life so illuminated and consecrated as to be a living sacrifice, one holy and acceptable unto God. In his estimation, one such living example is worth more than a host of inferior witnesses. He therefore agrees with Heraclitus who said: "One to me is as good as ten thousand if he be but the best."

Moreover, Paul insists that a Christian should be an unfaltering witness in behalf of possessions indispensable to human welfare and salvation. He therefore emphasizes the lofty responsibility with which Christ charged his disciples. The Apostle is not speaking of one's property, reputation, social status, academic honors, fraternal affiliations, nationality or race, however fine and helpful such matters are with respect to integrity, right living, and promotion of the Kingdom of the Lord. He proposes that the unique privilege and responsibility of a Christian is that of proving to erring men and women the good, the reasonable, and the perfect will of the Eternal God. He knew that the members of the human family, wittingly or not, are constantly before the bar of a just God who is not deceived or mocked.

Furthermore, Paul reveals how a Christian can witness. A man's life must become transformed so as to conform not to the codes of human opinion and practice, but to the will of God himself. Man is not for Paul the measure of all things. The writer of this Epistle to the Romans remembers his own growth and readjustment. His own transformation had required time,

effort, and suffering, but it had changed him from a bigot to a Christian evangelist. He therefore shows the urgent necessity of a discipline of body, a reorientation of interests, an enlargement of vision, a development of character, and a new dedication of loyalties. Such a transformation occurs, says Paul, only when a man is illuminated by Christ, "the true Light, which lighteth every man," morally purged by Christ, the "refiner's fire," and spiritually fed upon the food of truth by Christ, the Living Bread. Paul knew that a Christian's work, irrespective of the sphere in which it occurs, must be constructive and pre-eminently worth while. He therefore insisted upon deep consecration, superior motives, and productive labor.

Preparation for Christian Service

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

—Acts 13:1-3

IN THESE DAYS OF PERPLEXITY, CONFUSION, AND PERIL, NO OTHER WORK is more important and more difficult than that of a Christian minister. The minister is a representative of God to a world filled with dangerous ideologies, racial hatreds, unbridled selfishness, and widespread human carnage. In this chapter of the Acts are lessons vital and pertinent, for these Christians confronted problems similar to those of the present hour.

They felt the necessity of ministering. They had a genuine desire to make a positive contribution to the relief of human ills. They were aware of existing sickness, poverty, confusion, and deception. They recognized social inequalities, political turmoil,

and religious discrimination. They did not seek wealth, reputation, or official power; they did not know what of success or failure, applause or condemnation, comfort or misery awaited them; they only knew that they were resolved to do what they could to persuade men to become righteous men. To this glorious task they committed themselves.

These Christians also made preparation. They came together to discuss critical problems and crucial situations. They defined well the issues confronting them. They did not feast; they fasted. They did not loaf; they ministered. They did not assume that God rewards ignorance, indifference, indolence, and irreverence. They suffered no illusions about the training of such men as Abraham, Moses, Daniel, Isaiah, and the authors of Job and Ecclesiastes. They knew that God uses a man according as he is prepared to be used.

Then, too, these disciples prayed. They sought to undergird their own resources with the power available from God. Having themselves done what they could, they had the right to expect prayer to be answered. Jesus had promised that where two or three were at one in purpose in his name, there he would be also, and that the Father would not ignore those working in his Kingdom. So, having resolved to serve, having made preparation and having prayed, they were "sent forth by the Holy Ghost, [and] preached the word of God."

Wearers of Spiritual Purple

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

—Acts 16:14-15

IN THE ANCIENT WORLD ROYAL PURPLE WAS THE MOST COVETED DYE used to color garments. Purple robes were symbols of wealth, power, and royalty. Let us contrast some of those who wore this color, whose interests were temporal and whose authority sent slaves to the galleys and left beggars unfed at their gates, with some of those whose nobility of spirit entitled them to wear the purple of divine royalty.

These men and women, a host of them unknown and unsung, realized worthy and permanent nobility. The purple threads of their character stood out in the silent sheen of a reflective purity. Their royal robes of righteousness, their costly attire of moral heroism are even until now emblems of the beauty of the holiness of God. Thus did Lydia excel those who were in political au-

thority and financial power in Philippi. She neither followed the crowd, moved in the direction of least resistance, nor restricted her vision to that which can be seen or handled. In this way Heraclitus, a member of a distinguished family of Ephesus and an officer in the Temple of Diana, resigned his office, condemned unwholesome religious practices, and refused to live amid the luxury of the palace of an Eastern potentate. Thus he sought to preserve his freedom of thought and the right to worship according to the dictates of his conscience. Abraham attained a robe of never-fading purple when he set out by faith, not knowing where he went, to undertake to establish a God-centered society. Socrates' drab robe was transformed into a regal academic gown by convictions which enabled him to say to those about to condemn him to death: "Men of Athens, I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you."

Divine purple, moreover, represents a devout heart. Lydia worshiped God. She was interested in commercial affairs, was devoted to the home she maintained, and enjoyed relatives whom she loved; but it was God only whom she revered and worshiped. She had learned how to place the spiritual above the material, the unseen above the seen, and the eternal above the temporal. As God's child she merited the right to adorn herself with regal garments. It was thus that Daniel, daring to pray, revealed that he was a prince of the eternal realm. In this way Job, who said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," gained immortal peerage. The leaping flames that seared the flesh of dying Polycarp could not destroy the martyr's purple robe of faith which protected his soul as he cried, "Lord Jesus!"

Lydia's spiritual royalty, furthermore, impelled her to assume

the dignity of duty. Honest, consecrated, purposive labor is a divine and holy exercise. It became crystal clear to Lydia that she should minister. The sale of physical material became only a means to an end; her primary interest was that of assisting the apostles in proclaiming the gospel of Christ. Having adorned herself with the queenly robes of the Spirit, she laid up treasures of humble service, more valuable than potentates' gold and land gained by bloody oppression. Thus her regal glory became such as to make Nero, Caligula, Domitian, Lucrezia Borgia, Herodias, and Dives appear clothed in sordid and offensive rags, behaving as crudely as barbarians.

The "Spirit of the Lord" effects a transformation by means of which a life may become genuinely free, permanently valuable, majestically commanding. In this way Augustine turned from luxury to the "City of God." Francis of Assisi quit personal comfort to proclaim the love of God. Wilfred Grenfell ignored a brilliant professional reputation in order to demonstrate the Great Physician in Labrador. Florence Nightingale quit English society to become an angel of mercy in Crimea. Andrew Carnegie surrendered his fortune and became wealthy in spirit. John Harvard left his money to the cause of enlightenment, and his image, more enduring than the bronze statue in the Harvard Yard, is graven on the hearts of men. David Livingstone's arm was mangled by an African lion, yet no other man ever moved with such princely grace in the Dark Continent. When their souls became clothed with the seamless purple garment of faith in the Lord Christ and they became the Children of the Eternal, they each said, "Here am I, send me." And they then marched grandly into immortality.

A Christian Unashamed

I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

—ROMANS 1:14-17

THE APOSTLE PAUL LONGED TO VISIT ROME, FOR HE YEARNED TO PREACH the gospel there. He had a message to deliver in that city, the capital of the world's greatest empire, the seat of legal authority and military prowess, the home of the Caesars, a center of philosophy and of polytheistic religions. His one motive was to preach the gospel; and in bold and challenging words he wrote: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

There were three reasons why Paul, the Roman citizen, the distinguished scholar, the brilliant Hebrew theologian, and the devout Christian, was not ashamed of the gospel of his Lord.

Paul was proud of the author of the gospel. Of all the personalities with whom Paul was familiar, Christ was the greatest. He knew that Christ was the embodiment of the highest wisdom, the greatest courage, and the most unaffected graciousness. He discovered that Christ excelled Moses, Isaiah, Solomon, Jeremiah, Amos, and Gamaliel. He realized that Christ was superior in good judgment and constructive influence to the world-conquering Alexander, the legion-directing Julius Caesar, the law-giving Augustus, the orator Cicero, and the philosopher Seneca. For Christ, although confronted by the opportunity to gain temporal power, had looked beyond the transient attainment to the realization of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men. Thus his expressed wisdom, his unfaltering devotion to needy human beings, and his peerless good will eclipsed the work and the glory of all others. Paul, therefore, was not ashamed of the gospel of his Master.

Paul also knew that the gospel was the good news of God. He doubtless was familiar with the religious beliefs of Persia, Greece, Rome, and Palestine, and was aware of their values and limitations. He was likely well versed in the philosophy of the sophists, the Epicureans, the idealists, and the Stoics, and knew their worth and deficiencies. But in Jesus he had found the pearl of great price whose value exceeded immeasurably all other tenets and ideologies in religion and philosophy. Here was more than traditional religious authority and more than logic. Here was reality, full of grace and truth, in the simplicity of Jesus Christ. It was the good news about God.

For Christ revealed to Paul that God is not the anthropomorphic, provincial, capricious God of the early Hebrews, the

inexorable natural law of Xenophanes, or the austere universal reason of Zeno the Stoic. He showed that God is an accessible, compassionate, just Father. By clear illustrations, enlightening parables, immortal sermons, tender looks, kind words, a forgiving spirit, and an unfaltering faith, he showed that God is man's friend and not his enemy. The stories about the prodigal son, the lost sheep, the hungry children, and the lilies and the birds were used to reveal the infinite worth of a human life in the sight of God. And his own matchless bearing, even on the cross, exhibited boundless divine love.

Moreover, Paul knew that Christ's gospel transforms men. His good news illuminates the minds of men, transmutes their affections, and remotivates their actions. It is a reasonable message about the realism of life, the charm of the natural world, the relative values in human affairs, the sacredness of personality, the silent beauty of goodness, and the reality of divine justice. Like a lofty spiritual Everest, his ideal, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," causes men to leave their dark caves of error, their charnel vaults of impurity, and their hovels of ugliness. His Presence urges men on toward the high mark of God's truth, holiness, and beauty.

This gospel attracts and regenerates men, thus giving them salvation from mediocrity and evil. The husky fisherman, the despised tax gatherer, the curious Zacchaeus, the erring woman, the mentally unbalanced man, the tortured thief, and the scholarly Nicodemus were reborn and freed by it. Paul discovered that the world offers nothing else which so mellows, beautifies, and lifts the souls of men above the dross and commonplace.

Furthermore, Paul learned by experience that the gospel pro-

vokes lofty courage and loyalty. He had seen Stephen preach boldly, forgive unstintingly, and die gloriously. He himself willingly exposed intolerant Hebrew orthodoxy, preached the truth, was beaten, bore chains, felt the desertion of comrades, endured shipwreck, visited slums and palaces, worked with his hands, preached to potentates, and suffered death. But he said, "For me to live is Christ." Having found Christ, he could not compromise nor falter, whether before a murderous mob, an intellectual assembly on Mars Hill, an austere Caesar, a Roman jailer, or an executioner.

Impatience and Patience

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

—LUKE 9:51-56

JAMES AND JOHN REPRESENT HUMAN IMPATIENCE. SURGES OF INDIGNATION swept through their souls. The people of the Samaritan village had proved themselves to be narrow-minded, ungracious, and inhospitable. The disciples were a group of selected men on a benevolent mission. Their leader, Jesus, was an incomparable teacher, physician, and minister who performed wonderfully mi-

raculous deeds throughout Palestine. They were positive that Jesus would soon set up a perfect political order among the Jews. The inhabitants of the village were only Samaritans. Socially they were half-breeds of a barbarian race; religiously they were unclean outcasts. The Samaritans therefore were so jealous and selfish that they became offended when they discovered that Christ and his disciples were anxious to go to Jerusalem rather than to work in their community and to worship in their temple on Mount Gerizim. Hence they barred their doors to Christ and his group. James and John were infuriated by such outrageous insolence and wished to call down the consuming wrath of heaven upon the Samaritans and utterly destroy them.

Is it easy for us to become offended by littleness, crudeness, and bigotry, especially when such offensiveness occurs with those whom we regard as our inferiors socially, racially, and religiously. Not infrequently we impulsively attempt to fight the fire of the littleness, crudeness, and bigotry of other men with the fire of our own littleness, crudeness, and bigotry. We often feel that an objectionable man should be ostracized, that an offensive family should be required to leave the community, that social parasites should be left to starve, that a crude and backward country should be supplanted, that a barbaric totalitarian nation should be exterminated. We would, as it were, bring down fire from heaven upon those who are mean, heathenish, and brutish. We would rejoice if a hail of bombs fell upon totalitarian leaders who, like apocalyptic horsemen, ride roughshod over our culture, peace, and freedom. We are convinced that the world would be much better if such harbingers of misery and injustice were literally effaced from the earth. But such impatience and righteous indig-

nation breeds intolerance and fosters the vindictive primitive jungle code.

We have such attitudes not merely with respect to gross irregularities of other men, but also about our own Christian objectives. We can see evidences of impatience in the religious attitudes of men of all stations of life. Men of today cherish Christian ideals, but are so impatient that they stoop to brazenly non-Christian methods to attain their ideals. Psychological trickery and propaganda have been substituted for the ministry of reconciliation of man with God. Nearsighted apocalyptists beat the air vainly as they cry for God to destroy evil with the terrible blitzkrieg of an immediate second coming. Men of more serious minds, in their impatience that the ravines of poverty, unemployment, and racial inequalities shall be filled, wail that the ethic of Jesus is beautiful but cannot be applied to the present maelstrom of social injustice.

Christ, however, rebuked his beloved disciples for their impatience. He told them that it was evil they contemplated. He showed them that, as his disciples, they had no right to stoop to the level of returning evil for evil. The party thus passed on, leaving the nameless town to oblivion, a terrible price paid for ignorance, unwarranted pride, prejudice born of a feeling of inferiority, and a vindictive spirit.

The patience of God is beyond human comprehension. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." His process of creation is never hurried. He uses billions of years in forming the heavens, and countless millions of years in developing life on the earth. He permits man, through numberless generations of struggle, error, and wreckage, to gain dominion over the earth and over himself, to beat out his own

salvation on the anvil of experience. And, with all the cliffs and ravines in human history, in our saner moments we feel that "the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations"; that "the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."

We cannot comprehend God with our finite minds. But we can know him in Christ. Infinite patience and compassion were made a fact in Christ. He knew what was in men. He confronted every type of human being and every kind of situation. He met the little children, the fussing housekeepers, the physically sick, the mentally distressed, the dull students, the deserting disciples, the evasive and unjust judge, the selfish rich, the ungrateful lepers, the gambling soldiers, the fickle crowd, the murderous mob. Yet he never hurried, never used his power selfishly, never stooped to retaliatory practices. His was the patience of divine majesty. He showed that victory comes to him who is willing to do his best and then has the power to wait. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."

Man and Sin

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

—GENESIS 1:26-27

THE GREAT GENESIS STORY PORTRAYS THE POWERFUL DRAMA OF THE creation of man and of man's fall into sin. Many of us have permitted questions associated with the method of creation, the nature of the temptation, and the poetic Hebrew spoken by the serpent to trouble us unduly. Consequently we have overlooked some foundational facts which should not escape us.

First, man was created in the image of God. In the beginning God, in his own good time and way, irrespective of our opinion of date or place, breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living soul, a child of eternity. Thus man partook of the divine nature and possessed a measure of freedom. Being God-like, he was not restricted to the cold mechanism of natural law as stones, streams, plants, and brutes appear to be. Possessing a

spiritual nature, man had the power of selection and could choose good or evil.

Second, man abused his high estate. His power of selection, his ability to choose good or evil—his greatest endowment—eventually became the cause of his undoing. Essentially sin is the misuse, the misdirection, or the waste of man's freedom. Even a casual glance at life teaches us that man's rational power enables him to live in a garden of peace, or it causes him to be the denizen of a world in shambles. We may speculate about the ultimate cause of evil in the world, but in our quietest moments we only know that it is here. We may theorize about Satan, Baal, and Beelzebub, but regardless of the nature of the father of evil, the hellhounds of his awful progeny are all around us. The one thing we know is that evil is self-evident, because we ourselves are men of unclean lips and we live in the midst of a people of unclean lips. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way."

Third, the consequences of sin are inescapable. Regardless of the ultimate cause of sin, we are forced to confront its effects. There are means of punishing sin. This is a moral as well as a physical universe, and moral law cannot be violated with impunity. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Adam and Eve felt shame. They were conscious that they had done that which was evil in the sight of God; they tried to hide their faces from him—and this action itself was a form of punishment; they paid the penalty for their blunder; the effects of their sin extended to their succeeding generations.

Sin, once committed, passes out of man's control, like a bullet

fired from a high-powered rifle. Misdirected power is no respecter of persons; it wounds the just and the unjust, even for countless generations. "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit," said Jesus. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." We have a bumper crop of the fruits of sin. A large percentage of the human family are in the outer darkness of deprivation, disease, social slavery, and personal slothfulness. No human being, however, can escape the inescapable God. The psalmist felt this when he said: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

Life is real. God is the master of his own garden. We can no more escape him than we can escape the atmosphere about us. Once we have tried to hide ourselves behind a blot of sin, in some way or other he will say: "Where art thou? What hast thou done? Thou and thy children shall pay the penalty."

Removing Evil

I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—ROMANS 6:19-23

EVIL IS SELF-EVIDENT. ITS PERVERTING AND DEVASTATING EFFECTS upon body, mind, and spirit can be discovered easily on every hand. Jesus revealed means of escaping this insatiable ogre which constantly preys upon human life and mangles human happiness.

He revealed that we must be conscious of personal and social evil. He was conscious of the blights upon man and society. Al-

though he had never succumbed to temptation, he was moved with compassion for those who were in the clutches of evil. He saw the moral perverts, the social outcasts, and the spiritual paupers. To Jesus, who knew the hypocritical Pharisee and the famished beggar alike, evil was not a theory to be discussed but a force to be destroyed.

Jesus also indicated that man himself is expected to employ his own capacity and all the other resources at his command to prevent and to eliminate evils. We shall do very little to remove evil until we discover its hideous presence. For illustration, slavery in America, born of commercialism and prolonged through prejudice, was stamped out only when its ugliness was revealed. When the light of human intelligence was turned upon mental patients, they began to receive scientific and humane treatment. Diseases have been controlled according as medical science has discovered their causes and the methods of prevention and cure.

Men and women of the ages have often responded to the highest good they knew and have used their intellectual and material goods in removing evil. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Kant have elevated man with their great philosophical ideas. Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Handel have inspired men by their great musical productions. Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Hunt have given men of all walks of life an appreciation of beauty. Shakespeare, Browning, Milton, and Tennyson have enriched men's lives with their poetic expressions of truth. Moses, Hosea, Isaiah, and Paul have fed men with the spiritual bread of Life. Pasteur, Jenner, and Long have performed modern medical miracles to relieve human suffering. Such men made use of their powers to work and to wait as they strove to remove evil from

the world. It should be remembered that Jane Addams did not deal in idle sentiment concerning the slums—she built Hull House; Booker T. Washington had no “wailing wall” for his ignorant Negro brothers—he founded Tuskegee Institute. Nor have the great philanthropists simply felt sorry for unfortunate people—they have ministered to the poor, built great educational institutions, and given the means to carry healing to almost every portion of the world. A man has a right to pray, “Thy will be done,” when he has consecrated his own powers to the end of human righteousness and happiness.

Finally, Jesus revealed that we must rely upon the grace of God. Although man can remove evils, God forgives sins. It is by the grace of God, made understandable in Jesus, that men are freed from the pressure of a sense of guilt, assured of eternal security, and given a new lease on life here and now. Jesus never hesitated to say, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” The Christ himself stands at the very center of the meaning of life.

The grace of God, as revealed in Jesus, is greater than the little systems of men. As Coates has fitly said, “Christ’s truth . . . shines by its own light.” When this perfect light shines upon the conscience of a man, he can say with the Samaritans: “Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” Now we see through a glass darkly, but in Christ we know that “the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. . . . He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he

removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.”

God always hears a man when he prays, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” We know that he does, because one day Jesus heard a man pray that prayer.

An Adventurous Faith

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

—II TIMOTHY 4:3-7

ANY PERSON WHO EARNESTLY AND PERSISTENTLY SEEKS TRUTH MAY expect to suffer intellectual and spiritual growing pains. His horizon will become enlarged, his perspective clearer, his appraisal of values modified, and his faith transformed. Paul, an old man at the end of the course of his life, writes words of caution and wisdom to his young friend Timothy. In this letter he sends to Timothy—and to us—two pearls of wisdom.

Paul tells Timothy, first, that men will turn from the truth and will seek teachers who have done likewise. He thus warns

Timothy against various pitfalls. We need that word of caution as we learn. Our childish conceptions of the universe, of man, of society, and of religion are justifiably tested as by fire. As we study the facts of science, the vastness of space and time makes our world shrink like a punctured balloon. The relation of plants, brutes, and man perplexes us. Our utopian conceptions of society are shattered when we confront beastly ideologies appearing in business, professions, and government. We realize that religious leaders and religious organizations are not perfect. The apparent conflict between science and religion disturbs us. Some friend removes our rosy-pink glasses so that we may read even the Bible intelligently. And when we do read intelligently, we revise our conceptions of creation, find glaring weaknesses in our old thought forms, and balk at some of the conceptions of God portrayed by the ancient Hebrews. We wonder how a God who is the embodiment of perfect wisdom, justice, and love could decree the slaughter of women and children, institute a law which would permit a daughter to be sold into slavery, cause the death of a man who with a generous impulse touched the ark of the covenant, and not infrequently change his mind. Moreover, as we review human carnage, injustice, and suffering, we wonder why an all-knowing and all-powerful God is silent. The pains associated with our growth from intellectual childhood to manhood are often excruciating.

Paul next warns Timothy to fight a good fight and keep the faith in spite of the opposition of false teaching and personal doubt. This old saint, having himself passed from youth to maturity, was a scholar who knew the seriousness of intellectual problems. He himself had contended with perverters of the

truth, he bore the scars of a cruel world, and he had developed and kept a sound faith. His was an adventurous faith. By his own word and deed, then, Paul says to us that we should develop a sturdy spiritual body. The body of our character should bespeak our faith in God. We should, therefore, be sincere, and never wear the garb of dishonesty and hypocrisy. We should be pure in heart, so that we can grasp the finer golden threads of the truth. We should be intelligent, in order that we may be ready to apprehend the difference between God's truths and man's opinions. We must have a willingness to work, in order that we may separate the wheat of the essential facts about life, soul, personality, and God from the chaff of cant, rote, and sterile creeds. We should, as sons of God, cling to a sound faith in our heavenly Father.

"To have such sinews of character will," as Olin T. Binkley says, "enable one to escape from weakness to strength, from aimlessness to purpose, from anxiety to peace . . . from loneliness to companionship, from darkness to light, from death to life, from the trivial to the significant, from the temporal to the eternal."

What Doest Thou Here?

And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake:

And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

—I KINGS 19:9-12

THIS DRAMATIC STORY OF ELIJAH HAS A UNIVERSAL APPEAL FOR thoughtful men. Under circumstances similar to those in which the prophet found himself, we find ourselves reacting as he did. We can learn much, therefore, from the manner in which God dealt with Elijah.

The scriptural account shows that Elijah lived in a world socially morbid and religiously decadent. The government was steered by unscrupulous people; religion was made a canker of paganism by the prophets of Baal. Elijah felt himself to be a divinely called prophet, and so he had tried to remedy the prevailing conditions. He was a prophet of righteousness, an interpreter of the mind of God, and a servant for God's sake. But he learned that, because of his position and efforts, Jezebel planned to kill him.

We find ourselves today in a similar world. In spite of our ambitions and hopes, it seems that the forces of evil are against us and that the underpinnings of civilization are crumbling beneath us. Business is blighted by unprecedented taxation and regimentation; democracy is in mortal combat with despotism; cash values stifle idealism; pragmatic education supplants culture; Christian leadership appears to be complacent; the Baalish influence of secular interests perverts the true worship of God. Elijah was afraid, and he ran away. We also are frightened and want to escape. But to us, as to Elijah who ran away, the voice of God is unmistakable: "What doest thou here?"

Again, Elijah, living in a sick world, became discouraged. Amid the tempest he felt like crying out, "All is lost!" He felt that the prophets of God were useless, that the altars of God were destroyed, that his ideals were hopeless, and that he himself was a failure and an outcast. He was so despondent that he prayed to God to let him die. And how we can sympathize with him! In the face of apparently overwhelming odds, we say, "What is the use?" Totalitarianism suppresses justice and makes the world run with fresh blood; political trickery caricatures democ-

racy, and pawns human rights; religious leaders flee into the wilderness of cults, such as sanctificationism, Rutherfordism, Buchmanism, and premillennialism; God appears to have become an unknown reality. We have seen some men resigned to fatalism, others bitter with prejudice, and still others weeping in despair. Indeed, wind, earthquake, and fire encompass us, and in the midst of such chaos we fail to hear the voice of God.

But as Elijah later waited patiently upon the Lord, his soul was renewed. He then heard the still small voice of the Lord, saying, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" He did not hear the voice of God in the turmoil of the despair of his mind, but in the quietness of his reflections. Thus he realized that Jehovah is God, that a host of people had not bowed to Baal, that he himself was shirking his obligations, and that a great work awaited him—the task of selecting a religious leader for the coming generation. Elijah therefore arose to perform his manly duty, and again he began the work of a man in the name of God. The gauntlet is today thrown squarely before us. Shall we, in fear and despondency, seek a cave, pray to die, do nothing? Or shall we listen to the still small voice of hope and faith, and quit ourselves like Christian men in a chaotic world? In our quiet, reflective moments the still small voice may be heard, saying, as it did to Elijah, "What doest thou here?"

Christ's Standard for Man

For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

—LUKE 6:43-45

CHRIST CALLED TWELVE YOUNG MEN TO BE HIS SPECIAL STUDENTS. HE intended to place the task of the ages in their hands. He knew that if these men became successful leaders they would need to develop perfection of character, and that the light of such integrity would manifest itself in a blameless outward righteousness. Thoughtful people who desire a leading part in the great drama called life should, therefore, ponder the high standard that Jesus set for us.

Jesus taught his disciples that they should become perfect in character. He insisted that they avail themselves of the well of life-giving power that springs from a faithful love for God, a

compassionate love for people, and an insatiable hunger and thirst for righteousness. Jesus spoke in winged words of the conditions of Christian character, and he revealed its indispensable attributes as purity of heart, humility of mind, and all-inclusiveness of love. Jesus excels the idealism of all philosophers when he demands that we be perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect. In plain language he shows that human perfection excludes the poisons of hate, envy, covetousness, and retaliation. A master physician, he points to ignorance, arrogance, false pride, and hypocrisy as symptoms of deep-seated maladies of integrity. Jesus himself bespeaks the very antithesis of these evils. He expects his followers to love, to be wise, to be humble, to be meek, to be temperate, to forgive, to seek reconciliation, and to be spiritually hungry. To do this, Jesus knew, a man must be clearly aware of the reality of God and keep in constant touch with him. Jesus knew that such bedrock convictions and helpful relations give a man an unshakable foundation, and that such beams and bolts of spirituality hold him together in times of privation, anxiety, grief, and persecution. Jesus showed that a life which does not possess the inner stamina of Christian character is no more than a flimsy structure built on a foundation of sand.

Again, Jesus taught his disciples that inward perfection will manifest itself in a blameless outward righteousness. He said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good." Christian love and righteous action are the spontaneous desire of the man who clings to God and has reverence for human life. Such a man will practice modesty and humility—his right hand will not know what his left hand is doing. He will not willfully do another man an injustice, nor will he

degrade his own personality, for he respects not only himself, but also other men as he does himself. In the language of philosophy, his ideal will be: "Always act so that you can will the maxim or determining principle of your action to become universal law; act so that you can will that everybody shall follow the principle of your action. . . . Act so as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal and never as a means." He will adopt the Golden Rule, that is, he will put himself in the other man's place, understand his weaknesses, be aware of his temptations, sympathize with his feelings, and adjust himself to his limitations. He will seek "the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," and these characteristics of inner nobility will be added unto him.

The man who marches under the unfurled standards of Christ can justly be called a great man, because he is a good man.

Jesus and the Will of God

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

—ROMANS 12:1-2

TO DISCOVER THE WILL OF GOD IS OUR HIGHEST PRIVILEGE, GREATEST need, and finest source of strength. As Dante says, "In his will is our peace." Five clear suggestions come to us from Jesus himself, who knew the perfect will of God.

First, Jesus used common sense in reflecting about life. He knew that a house built on sand could not withstand stress, that a builder should first count the cost, and that a human life is worth vastly more than an ox. Sane judgment and the divine will are consistent; man, therefore, must allow God's will to be manifested through the lawful working of the human mind. Reason teaches, for illustration, that the world does not owe us a living, and that God does not reward slothfulness, stupidity, and littleness with prosperity, culture, and character. An intelligent man knows that right is better than wrong, that justice is more

desirable than injustice, that honesty is superior to dishonesty, that self-control is more constructive than license, and that love is more blessed than hate.

Second, Jesus devoted his life to honest work. He worked hard during the thirty silent years, as well as during his active ministry. Jesus dignified labor and revealed the Father as the worker of the vineyard. He said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Moreover, he chose busy men for his disciples. The monks of Cluny spoke aright in their conviction that "To labor is to pray." The world's finest characters are those who work with devotion and diligence. Honest labor, therefore, is essentially holy exercise, and it is to him who labors that the will of God becomes clearest. As Carlyle says, then, "Man's first problem is to discover the work he should do."

Third, Jesus discovered the difference between appearance and reality. He never mistook an echo for a voice, or a shadow for a substance. Paul declared that the "things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." If, therefore, we do not believe that life consists of more than that which we can see with our eyes, handle with our hands, and prove by mathematics, we are in poor condition to know the good and perfect will of God. This great truth each of us, as he passes from intellectual youth to maturity, must learn for himself. As John Locke exclaimed, we "may as well hope to see with other men's eyes as to know with other men's understanding." And it follows that when one apprehends the truth for himself, he will be impelled by it. Jesus showed the intimate relation between doing and knowing. Hear him: "If any man will do his will, he shall know."

Fourth, Jesus loved men because they were men. He used the parable of the lost sheep, the story of the good Samaritan, the devotion of the father of the prodigal son, the graphic picture of Lazarus and Dives, and the description of the last judgment to show God's love for man and God's will that men shall love one another. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" We must love men, therefore, not from a sense of duty and not for hope of gain, but because they are human beings. If we love men spontaneously, compassionately, and intelligently, as Jesus loved them, we have attained unto a great portion of the will of God.

Finally, Jesus never compromised his faith in the truth and righteousness of God. In the face of temptation and agony beyond description in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, and on the cross, Jesus held fast to his faith. Supported by the will of God as manifested in his own common sense, his devotion to his life's purpose, his profound understanding of life, and his all-inclusive love for men, Jesus could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Jesus is the will of God made plain to men. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed. . . . How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP

1

A Prayer for Beauty

Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

—Psalm 90:16-17

THE PSALMIST OFTEN CONTEMPLATES THE MAJESTY OF THE EVERLASTING God and the marvels of his universe. He regards the human soul as an earthly sanctuary of the living God, and feels that such a spiritual temple requires perfect adornment. With poetic intuition he therefore prays that "the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

This comprehensive prayer is a plea for appreciation of the grandeur of God's realm of nature. It embraces towering mountain, restless sea, glowing sun, and jewel-sprinkled night. It covers the smallest unit of energy, stellar bastions, space, time, and law. It includes the graceful lily and the giant oak, the modest amoeba and dominion-making man.

The sweeping petition also states man's yearning for achievement. Knowledge illumines the natural universe and clothes it with the vesture of reason. Culture provides the wealth of art,

architecture, literature, music, philosophy, and other treasures taken by the hand of genius from Jehovah's house of wealth. Wisdom is the apprehension of the foundations of scientific fact, the relations of logic, the prevalence of moral law, the essence of personal dignity, and the existence of God.

The psalmist prays especially for awareness of the unutterable beauty of the Lord himself. Transient natural grandeur and passing intellectual achievement are not sufficient for the adornment of the holy of holies of the soul. Perceptual beauty is but a symbol of God's book of nature; rational beauty is merely a reflection of God's universal statutes; aesthetic beauty is only the reflected glow of God's realm of harmony. But spiritual beauty is essentially enlightened and applied faith in the reality, the majesty, and the goodness of God. It effects an excellence of the soul that transforms one's outer self. God is a Spirit, and the incomparable spiritual jewels—mercy, justice, compassion, love—are the proper ornaments of the soul.

Seek knowledge, therefore, in many ways and places. Enter the sanctuary and pray that the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.

2

The Need for Worship

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

—II Corinthians 3:12-18

DIVINE WORSHIP IS AN EXPERIENCE OF THE HUMAN SOUL WITH THE eternal God. As Willard L. Sperry says, it is "the adoration of God, the ascription of supreme worth to God, and the manifestation of reverence in the presence of God."

In adversity a person needs support. He experiences disappointment, failure, grief, illness, and death. He observes the clash of ideologies, the social discrimination, the devices of bureaucrats, the menace of tyrants, the conflicts that maim or destroy countless millions of human lives. The struggle for shelter, food, health, and freedom often seems hopeless. Reflection upon the immensity of time and space and the universality of death at times provokes a sense of futility. So heavily do such considerations weigh upon a person that unless spiritual experience sustains him, he is disposed to say with Omar:

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.

But man often withstands adversity better than he does success. Achievement in the fields of nature, industry, and government may develop in him the prideful assumption that he is the complete master of his fate. Such self-deification causes a person or a nation to lose sight of God as the author and conservator of all permanent values, and such spiritual blindness leads to confusion and destruction. If a person relies upon sensory facts and temporal values only, he is lost; for wrong objects of devotion produce malformation of character and cause evil motives and practices. Dual standards, fanaticism, criminality, dogmatism, intolerance, and psychoses are fruits of misdirected devotions. Self-enchantment is perhaps the most prevalent form of idolatry;

conceit is the core of sin. Material and political success in business, government, education, or religion fosters paganism. Whether the object of perverted worship is a golden calf, money, science, a man, oneself, the state, or the church, the fruit is evil.

Divine worship is necessary because it provides wise direction. Superior character is formed through worship. A person tends to become like that which he adores, loves, and worships. Interest is an architect of the mind; devotion is an artist of personality; and love is an alchemy of the spirit. As a great affection converted Elizabeth Barrett Browning from illness to health, so a magnificent obsession derived from an experience with God directs a person from small interests to great devotions and transforms him from moral weakness to spiritual strength. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

Worship is needed because it re-creates character. The only cure for the personality defect caused by misdirected devotion is the worship of the highest. It is genuine appreciation of the permanent, the good, the beautiful, and the true that enables a person or a nation to discard the false and to rise from the mediocre to the superior. Isaiah knew this truth, for, surcharged with spiritual insight, he wrote:

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. . . . They that wait upon the Lord shall renew

their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Jesus Christ is our unique and proper object of worship. John knew the supremacy of the Christ when he said: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." The author of Second Corinthians knew the transforming power of the Christ, for he wrote that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image . . . as by the Spirit of the Lord." Throughout his ministry people of every condition of life felt the impact of Jesus Christ's divine character. A Gadarene demoniac ran to him and was restored to his home and friends. An erring woman bathed his feet with tears and went away filled with hope and joy. A bereaved family witnessed his power, and happiness replaced grief. An impetuous man talked with him and then affirmed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." A disciple who was enshrouded with doubt experienced the living Christ and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." A converted Pharisee who had been recreated by Christ said: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Worship of Jesus Christ also reveals the solution of the problem of death and immortality, for it enables one to experience the living truth, the master of death. Paul plainly says: "And if

Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

The only person worthy of worship, and the only truth worth living for or dying for, is Jesus Christ.

3

Conditions of Prayer

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

—John 14:12-14

WE CHERISH ASSOCIATION WITH FRIENDS; WE SEEK THE COUNSEL OF authorities in various areas of human interest. But our Lord shows that, above all human contacts, prayer is a person's supreme relationship.

He reveals that prayer is essentially communion with God. God is a Spirit, and prayer, therefore, is an ineffable experience of the human soul with the transcendent-immanent, eternal Spirit. Prayer thus excels any form of purely human relationship, for it enables one to feel the presence of the Creator of the universe and to receive his mercy and grace and power. Jesus knew the nature and the need of prayer. He prayed when he confronted great responsibility, in the presence of anxiety and grief, and during personal agony. He taught his disciples to pray, and he him-

self prayed for friends who loved him—and for enemies who mocked and killed him.

This superlative relationship entails tremendous personal responsibility. We are not indifferent about important conferences with high officials, an appearance before a tribunal of justice, visits in homes, or our duties to our friends. Just so, we cannot disregard the canons of communion with God. There consequently rests with us the grave responsibility of preparing ourselves to approach him, hear him, and understand him. Jesus plainly showed, for example, the necessity of reverence, humility, contriteness, a genuine sense of need, and purity of motive. Our Lord could not reveal himself to the arrogant, self-righteous, and self-sufficient; and he affirmed that some people make it impossible for God to bless them. But Jesus never failed to respond to the plea of a humble taxgatherer, a faithful centurion, a bereaved widow, a distressed mother, a blind beggar, a desolate leper, or a devout scholar.

Prayer also requires the will to action. It demands that, to the extent of a person's ability, he do his best to think and act in conformity to God's will. When one prays, "Thy will be done," he must himself do something about establishing God's will in his own life and among men. The Spirit of truth does not tolerate indifferent loafers, willful beggars, chronic and empty sentimentalists, unethical petitions for comfortable berths, selfish desires, and the prostitution of ability. A person has a right to pray for his community, his home, and his church when he does what he can for them. He can pray for wisdom and guidance when he strives to grow intellectually and live righteously. He can invoke divine blessing upon the sick, the destitute, and the

confused when he positively tries to help such unfortunate individuals. He can reasonably ask forgiveness, justice, mercy, grace, and love when he endeavors to practice those virtues. Our Saviour was faultless in his ideals and his work, and the Father heard his prayers.

4

Gaining Divine Help

And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that fol-

lowed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

—Luke 7:2-10

OUR GREATEST NEED IS DIVINE HELP. SPIRITUAL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE to us, however, only to the extent that we become worthy of them. The Roman centurion expressed three characteristics of a sound personal integrity which enabled Jesus to help him.

First, the centurion was unselfish. Our Master, who knew God intimately and did his will constantly, made it plain that if a person's life is to conform to spiritual law, he must lose his life in devotion to truth and righteousness. The centurion loved the people with whom he lived; he earned their respect and affection; he built them a house of worship and otherwise did what he could for them. Jesus, himself the paragon of unselfishness, therefore freely responded to an appeal made by a man dominated by kindness.

Second, the centurion was humble. He was, of course, a firm and courageous Roman officer; but he was not warped by enslaving vanity, blinding arrogance, or putrefying self-righteousness. He was gravely concerned about a servant who was ill; he turned to Jews for help, refusing to exercise the prestige of Roman citizenship or the authority of military rank. He felt himself unqualified to approach Jesus, and said that his home was unworthy of the Master's presence. Humility is characteristic of a great man, and our Lord, who himself was humble, deeply appreciated that virtue.

Finally, the centurion possessed a superior sense of values. He knew the sacredness of a human life; he was distressed about human suffering; and he recognized the superlative character, the divine graciousness, and the boundless curative resources of Jesus. He therefore sought the Master and asked him for help. And our Lord naturally granted the good man's noble request.

5

Place and Privilege

Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

—Ezekiel 3:15-17

ONE HEARS THE QUESTION, "HOW CAN I KNOW GOD'S WILL FOR ME?" It is a sane and major inquiry. Ezekiel reveals a means of discovering God's will, for he reports what he himself did and what he experienced.

First, Ezekiel sat where the people sat. In the midst of his captive friends he observed broken hearts, physical suffering, and abuses inflicted by merciless taskmasters. He discovered disloyalty, idolatry, and wickedness; but he also heard prayers for deliverance, expressions of hope of return to Jerusalem, and utterances of devotion to the God of their fathers. When any thoughtful person sees people as they actually live, he likewise finds wealth and poverty, culture and ignorance, health and ill-

ness, sanity and derangement, freedom and bondage, hope and despair.

Second, Ezekiel was astonished. The fruits of tragedy and calamity shocked him. His very soul was shaken by the lethargy, disloyalty, and evil that he saw; but he was also thrilled by the love, faithfulness, and reverence that he discovered.

We are amazed by depravity, selfishness, and moral corruption existing in places high and low. We are also astonished by the excellence of character we observe, often in utterly unsuspected places. There are, for example, students who pursue their work under incredible circumstances. There are, too, the sacrificial labor of parents, the patience and compassion of those who minister to the ill and the afflicted, personal effacement in loyalty to other people, and sacrifice of life in devotion to a friend or a cause.

Ezekiel sat where people sat; he was amazed; and then God spoke to him. Sensitized by people as he found them, Ezekiel felt the presence of God, heard God's call to service, and became a prophet. Spiritual truth is not discovered in a vacuum. It is under the conditions of clear observation and deep sympathy that the divine in man is touched by the eternal Spirit. For God speaks to men in the midst of their realistic and enlightened appreciation of human worth, human suffering, and human need. Whether it is to a General Booth, a David Livingstone, or a Jane Addams, the divine call comes—to each person in his own way—when a person really knows the needs and nature of people.

6

Regal Companionship

And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

—Mark 9:2-7

ONE DAY OUR LORD TOOK THREE YOUNG MEN ON A JOURNEY, IN THE course of which they had superlative experiences. The journey offered unusual rewards but required much personal effort. Jesus led the disciples up a high mountain. Whether one climbs the exacting peaks of professional skill, the rugged slopes of

scholarship, the commanding heights of statesmanship, or the luminous eminences of saintliness, the ascent is difficult and requires exertion. No such lofty summit is reached without the use of strength, initiative, persistence, and hard labor. Our Lord led these men—as he would lead any person—up the steep incline to the snow-covered crest, where the oxygen of social approval was thin but where the spiritual view was large.

When they had attained the summit, the disciples observed celestial grandeur. They witnessed the ineffable transfiguration of our Master as he communed intimately with God. They saw Moses, the peerless statesman, and Elijah, the majestic prophet, as spiritual leaders in timeless relation with God. The disciples, moreover, heard the voice of the eternal Father giving the superb proclamation and matchless command: "This is my beloved Son; hear him."

Finally, Jesus revealed to these men their superior personal responsibility. Willful disregard of responsibility is lethal selfishness, and voluntary complacency is a cardinal evil. For it is a function of intelligence to penetrate and to illuminate the dark recesses of ignorance; it is the province of wisdom to relieve human need; it is the privilege of spiritual strength to minister to human frailty. When, therefore, the disciples desired to remain at the place of ecstasy, Jesus immediately led them down to the foot of the mountain, where they found a thoughtless crowd, human affliction, mental anguish, and impotent leadership. And there our Lord's first act was, characteristically, one of ministry to human need.

7

Christ's Standard

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

—Matthew 5:43-48

A PERSON'S IDEALS MOLD AND REVEAL HIS CHARACTER, DIRECT HIS efforts, determine his usefulness, and inspire his self-respect. Our Lord set the highest of standards, for he said: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

This standard requires hospitality to the truth. Ignorance is the inability to recognize facts and values. Evil is failure to con-

form to spiritual verities. Stupidity is refusal to appreciate worth. Wickedness is willful rejection of the highest perceived values. Christ permits no compromise with ignorance, evil, stupidity, wickedness, or any other source of weakness. He demands of every person the best of which that person is capable—in mental development, ethical devotions, spiritual insights, and honorable motives.

Christ's standard embraces realistic observation. Jesus knew life intimately. He experienced the serious responsibilities of the home of a widowed mother and orphan children. His people suffered the iron heel of the foreign oppressor and the burden of local despots. He saw families haunted with poverty, tortured by affliction, and saddened by death. He met scholarship and illiteracy, humility and arrogance, love and hate, spiritual beauty and moral hideousness, saving faith and malignant skepticism. Jesus sought no ivory tower, and today he offers no escapism from a realistic world.

Christ also expects the maximum of fine achievement. He wants our work to be of the highest quality. He requires undivided devotion to the real and the primary, for he sets reality above appearance, the permanent above the temporary, principle above expediency, love above comfort, mind above matter, and truth above opinion.

Finally, our Lord's standard promotes valid self-respect. Jesus constantly taught the worth and dignity of man. As evidence of his knowledge of human worth, our Lord talked with Nicodemus, who possessed all that natural inheritance and cultural environment could bestow; then he went serenely to the poor woman of Samaria, whose reputation was bad and whose back-

ground the Jews despised. He conversed with a rich and respected young ruler, then heard the searching plea of a humble Syro-phenician mother. He ministered in a lovely Bethany home, and gave relief to miserable outcast lepers by the road. He prayed for his disciples during the Last Supper, and he promised salvation to a thief. He revealed God's love for a person and showed that a man, by the cultivation of humility, peace, tolerance, love, and reverence, grows into the likeness of God. In Virgil's great drama, in discussion of his ancestry, Aeneas exclaims: "Why speak of mighty Theseus, why of Alcides? . . . I also am descended from Jupiter, the All-Highest." Our blessed Lord would have us know and say: "Why boast of race? why of social heritage? Our lineage is of the eternal God, our Father."

8

The Father's Love

And he said, A certain man had two sons:

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

—Luke 15:11-15

INTELLIGENT PERSONS FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ESCAPE STAGGERING questions. For example, in view of what we call time and space, and in face of the vast number of living people and thousands of generations of the human family, is it possible that God has personal concern for every member of each generation? In the story of the two foolish sons of a noble father Jesus answers the question.

One of the sons wasted his resources of money, time, energy, character, and self-respect. He left a good home, deserted his par-

ents, went to the wrong places, associated with bad people, stooped to corrupt practices, and sank to social degeneracy. The other stayed at home, showed consideration for his parent's wishes, did his duty, and was generally respectable.

Then the two young men each experienced a personal crisis. The prodigal recognized his depravity. He saw himself on the level of unclean swine, in grave need, and unworthy of readmission to his father's home. Humiliated and humbled, he penitently sought a servant's place with his father. When the other son learned of his brother's return, he exposed his arrogant, selfish, resentful nature. He proved that his respectability was only a veneer. He had paraded loyalty, efficiency and devotion; but despite outward appearances of decency he was inwardly seething with jealousy, selfishness, vindictiveness, and resentfulness. He was much worse than his brother, for he objected to his father's kindness, had no sense of forgiveness, complained of another's good fortune, and wished to kick one who was down and out.

The father, however, with his heart filled with love and joy, welcomed his wayward son home. He likewise loved his dutiful son and treated him with complete justice and affection. Our Master thus reveals the intelligent, boundless, and persistent love of God for every one of his children. However wayward and however unkind we are, Jesus taught that God the Father loves every one of us with such intensity that he and the very angels of heaven rejoice when we return to him.

9

Personal Obligation

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatever disease he had.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

—John 5:2-8

OUR LORD USED PLAIN WORDS ABOUT ABILITY AND OBLIGATION. FOR example, to the despondent man lying by the pool he said three pertinent things.

First, he said to the prostrate man surrounded by dirt and trash, "Stand up!" Selfish people ignored and abused this man. Physical disability, mental deprivation, and psychopathic resignation weakened him. Our Master never enfeebled people with his sympathy, nor did he substitute self-pity for self-respect. He never condoned slothfulness, approved ignorance, or excused negligence. Jesus regarded a man as a potential son of God, and he urged that a person use his great heritage in effort to remove evil, discover truth, and achieve freedom. Jesus therefore told the man to stand up and rise above the objectionable conditions surrounding him.

Second, Jesus said: "Take up thy bed." The bed represented two things. To this man it was a symbol of weakness. It meant illness, inferiority, injustice, hopelessness, and inaction. The bed was therefore the master of the man, serving to make him a whimpering, complaining, despairing person.

The bed was also a symbol of personal resources. It represented property, thought, time, and labor. A man's available resources are his talents, and a moral universe brings him to judgment about them. The man lay on his bed by the pool—whining, dependent, complaining, negligent of his resources. Jesus told him to pick up his bed, and thus to respect his high estate of personal worth. For the first time in his life the man met someone who believed in him and did not take his estimate of himself as the last word, and he therefore began to believe in himself.

Finally, Jesus told the man to walk. In these days of crisis will we crawl as moral hypochondriacs? When precious liberties are threatened, will we grovel upon threadbare pallets stuffed with despondency? With the healing waters of living truth available

will we resign ourselves to cesspools of ignorance and superstition?

With compassion, divine and firm, our Master said: "Get up and walk; exercise your will; move out from these squalid circumstances; act with intelligent determination worthy of a man." And the poor man—looking upon the magnetic, inspiring, and gracious Master—got up and walked.

10

Kingly Responsibility

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

—Proverbs 25:2

THIS PROVERB STAGGERS THE IMAGINATION. IN ONE SENTENCE OF swift-running words the writer proclaims the glory of God's creation and the regal nature of human discovery.

The author says that in the timeless process of creation God established every basic mode of existence. Creation thus embraces all substance, mind, and law. It includes atom and star, alga and redwood, amoeba and man, sensation and reason, fear and understanding. It covers chemical affinity, organic development, and all other essentials of nature. It includes psychological laws and ethical principles. The proverb therefore affirms that the universe is a vast treasure house which attests the creative majesty of its author.

The writer also asserts that it is the honor and privilege of a man to search out treasures concealed in the universe. With courage and insight man discovers that a grain of sand reflects nature's mighty crucible; that strata of rock speak eloquently of time; that celestial nebulae suggest the travail of cosmic evolu-

tion; that fossils are records of the great drama of organic history. He also finds that the structure of coal, the habits of insects, and the migrations of birds are pages of God's book of works. He learns that music and art and kindness and honor are of our Lord's gallery of beauty.

The opportunity to search for such priceless treasures is therefore a royal challenge. Celestial galaxies beckon, and man constructs the Mount Palomar telescope. The atom invites examination, and man builds the cyclotron. Illness brings suffering, and man invades the precincts of those things which cause disease. Creative thought provides halls of learning, founds governments, and formulates codes of justice. Genius creates music, poetry, and art. Likewise great ideas—man's primary achievement—rend the veil of ignorance and permit us a glimpse of the object of wisdom. The discovery and use of faith in transcendent-immanent truth will eventually furnish a basis of world brotherhood. The wise, devout, and persistent search for the kingdom of God adds all things to us.

God's matchless treasures are everywhere within and about us. It is our royal privilege to explore and to discover.

11

Choice

Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

—Joshua 24:14-15

THE PRIVILEGE OF CHOICE IS A CARDINAL ENDOWMENT. IT IS ALSO an inescapable, imperative, and exacting process. The eloquent Joshua suggests three conditions.

First, choice must be made. The very nature of one's body, mind, and environment demands choice. The human organism requires selection of food, clothing, and shelter. The growth of the mind involves attraction and discrimination. Social adjustment entails selection and evaluation. Ethical appreciation presumes wise discernment. We must choose, this day and every day.

Moreover, selection becomes habitual, and thus choice determines one's master. Habits are acquired through choice, and

likewise perceptions become established, interests fixed, motives shaped, ideals developed, and character molded. Often a single decision produces serious results. As Virgil states, to descend is easy, but to reascend is difficult. A foolish choice can handicap the body, distort the mind, and warp the soul; while a wise decision promotes health, culture, and intelligence. An Esau, a Judas Iscariot, a Benedict Arnold, a Quisling takes the fatal step into indelible shame; conversely an Abraham, a Joshua, a John Harvard, a Schweitzer makes the decision that exalts him into immortality. A person's choices, therefore, forge bonds of slavery or open the doors of freedom.

Finally, because of its importance, choice must be made wisely. Joshua affirmed that whatever others did, he and his house would serve God. Socrates chose death rather than stoop to evil, and thus walked into immortality. Roger Williams chose freedom to think and to worship rather than the slavery of conformity to personal comfort, and became a pioneer of religious liberty. Robert E. Lee decided to teach young men in a small, poverty-stricken college rather than sell his good name for much gold, and became a model for the succeeding ages of cultured gentlemen. Above all others Jesus decided to commit himself unreservedly to do the will of God through persistent ministry to human need. He accepted full responsibility for his choice and set his face steadfastly toward the Cross. Our Lord is therefore the perfect example of personal nobility and genuine greatness. He was, as John says, "full of grace and truth."

12

The Great Physician's Character

And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judæa and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

—Luke 6:17-19

JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN. THE PRESENT DANGEROUS attack upon the body of civilization and the existing serious complications demand him as physician. Now when we choose a physician, we want to know who he is and what he is.

Our Master's superb character is one evidence of his greatness and dependability. Jesus was born into a home of royal lineage and of superlative spiritual interests. His physical strength was adequate; his mental ability was superior; his training was excellent; his character was faultless. He learned to work; he knew the value of work, and he loved to work. He was mentally alert, for he observed every condition of life about him. He was intel-

lectually honest, for he never ignored a problem, evaded an issue, or compromised a decision. His wisdom was peerless, and his insights and judgments were perfect.

Jesus' character is further revealed by his boundless sympathy. He felt deep compassion for every needy person. Like a true physician, he never discriminated against a less respected person by reserving his time and energy for more prominent citizens. He ministered with complete impartiality to people of every social, economic, and intellectual level; and he never permitted a selfish motive to affect his attitude toward any person who came to him for relief. Whether his dealings were with a lovely hostess at Bethany, an ignorant woman at a well, an untouchable leper calling from a distance, or a blind beggar by the road, he devoted whatever time and skill seemed necessary to any person who sought his help.

Furthermore, as an evidence of his dynamic personality, Jesus possessed an overflowing, compelling love. Our Master's love was no mere sentiment; it was no transient emotionalism. It was a concrete love for a blind man, a sick woman, an afflicted child, a bereaved widow. He loved the young man who sorrowfully turned away, the disciple who profanely denied knowing him, the thief on a cross, the city of Jerusalem. His love was so unblemished that even in the face of mockery and suffering he expressed no unkindness, remembered his mother, prayed for the murderous mob, and died like a God. Our Master loved God and persons so completely that he literally lost his life in fighting human error and in ministering to human need.

13

The Great Physician's Diagnostic Skill

And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

—Luke 5:27-31

ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS IS A PREREQUISITE TO INTELLIGENT TREATMENT. Unless a physician first ascertains the nature of an illness, the treatment may be worthless or harmful. A great doctor first discovers the seat of an organic malady and then, if necessary, wisely prescribes surgery or medication.

Jesus was an infallible diagnostician of human conditions. He knew people. Somewhat like a wise old family physician and a brilliant specialist combined, Jesus was so sensitive to physical,

mental, and ethical abnormalities that he never failed to detect them and never made an error in identifying them. As Raymond Calkins suggests, our Master's sensitiveness was like the spiritual counterpart of a stethoscope or an electrocardiograph, which enabled him to detect easily and to diagnose correctly the heartbeat of every person with whom he came in contact.

For example, Jesus met Nicodemus. He appreciated the man's scholarship, leadership, and spiritual hunger; but he also knew that Nicodemus was so restricted by traditional authority and technical facts that he did not understand spiritual reality. He met a model young man who not only knew the Hebrew law but also had kept the letter of the law from his childhood. One who lives such a faultless life would be hard for us to diagnose; but it was not difficult for our Lord to do so, for he understood that a positive human life defies technical regimentation and that goodness does not consist merely of respect for legal codes and rigid observance of social standards. Our Lord was acquainted with a man of wealth. He did not say that the man was evil because he lived in a fine house, wore expensive clothing, and ate good food. But he detected the man's calloused soul and exposed it by showing that he cared less for unfortunate people than did the very dogs at his gate that licked a beggar's sores.

In his examination Jesus went to the focus of infection. He never mistook symptoms for the disease itself. He never let an outward display obscure an inner motive. He knew the type of people who substitute shallow emotionalism for deep conviction, and he saw them wilt in the severe heat of the noonday sun. He saw the pompous Pharisees, who so adorned themselves and paraded their religion that they were held in awe. But their

pomp and dignity never fooled Jesus; he told them that they were "whited sepulchers . . . full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." In sharp contrast, however, he understood the benevolent heart of the humble woman who cast her small coins into the treasury, and he made an immortal eulogy of her unaffected generosity. He recognized the kindness of the humble centurion, and he spoke in superlative praise of John the Baptist.

Finally, in his diagnosis our Lord did what physicians and preachers are now beginning to do; that is, he took into consideration the whole person and all the factors contributing to his condition. He recognized the interaction of body and mind and spirit. He knew, for example, how hunger affects personality. He saw how diseases harm the body and injure the mind. He was aware of the pernicious evils resulting from improper education, and he saw how false ideologies degrade persons, institutions, and nations. He knew how selfishness, prejudices, social inequities, economic problems, political evils, and ironclad social codes produce base attitudes and shape criminal tendencies. He realized how morbid fears weaken the body, injure the mind, and chain the soul. Our Lord anticipated, in principle, every worthy accomplishment of medical science, sociology, government, and education.

14

The Great Physician's Treatment

And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

—Luke 6:7-10

HIMSELF A PHYSICIAN, LUKE FILLED MANY PAGES OF HIS BOOK WITH reports of our Master's treatment of numerous types of human infirmity. How did Jesus treat his patients?

Above all our Lord insisted upon a clean operation. He wasted no time in doctoring symptoms, nor did he presume to remove an infection by the use of a charming bedside manner. He never tried to cure moral anemia with soothing platitudes, nor did he endeavor to remove evil by the use of flattery. He never con-

doned evil, and he did not treat sin with applications of hackneyed praise. If the malady was some dangerous habit or base attitude, Jesus said, "Get rid of it." In caustic hyperbole he cried out: "If your hand offends you, cut it off; if your eye is evil, pluck it out." If the disease was greed, he used the purge of righteous indignation. If the trouble was a dual standard of life, he said: "You cannot serve two masters." If the infection was religious hypocrisy, with justifiable determination he applied the surgeon's lancet—and he administered no anesthetic for his moral surgery. Whatever the trouble, the Master prescribed complete removal of the evil virus or the baleful malignancy.

Jesus inspired confidence. The attitude of the patient toward himself and those who treat him is very important. We understand the fine role a great doctor and a good nurse play. It is said that Sir William Osler's very presence in the sickroom effected miracles, and some of us have observed that there is no finer moral therapy in a community than the radiant personality of a noble person. In this way our Lord's unblemished character, his undiluted sympathy, his perfect serenity, his absolute fearlessness, his unaffected understanding, his failure to show surprise, and his attitude of complete authority commanded respect and inspired hope. The words, "Lord, thou canst make me well," were heard from Nazareth to Calvary.

Jesus required personal initiative. It is, of course, difficult for a physician to treat a sick person successfully unless the patient himself co-operates; therefore, when possible, hospitals arrange for mental patients to undertake some type of occupational therapy. A teacher knows that a student's intellectual growth requires personal effort, and it appears that God himself cannot

help an utterly indifferent person or penetrate a self-satisfied mind. In many cases of serious illness there is a time when the will-to-live becomes determinative.

Except with the helpless, our Lord required a patient to show personal effort and to use his own available resources. The Master never tolerated indifference, condoned laziness, or encouraged a feeling of helplessness. He did not cultivate self-pity, arouse despair, or express an enervating type of sympathy. On the contrary, he told an afflicted man to pick up his bed and walk; he asked the blind man to go wash in the pool of Siloam; he required lepers to go show themselves to the priests; he told the man with the withered hand to stretch forth his hand.

In his curative treatment Jesus furthermore gave the patient a sense of personal worth and endowed life with meaningfulness. Many people are enslaved by a feeling of inferiority or are despondent because of a sense of futility. No preacher who cultivates a feeling of abject depravity by proclaiming that man is a crawling worm in the dust is true to his high calling. No doctor who removes a person's justifiable self-respect is an honor to his profession. No teacher who damages a student's sense of personal worth and ability is fit for the classroom. No administrator who regards his associates as hirelings is worthy of his office. The suppression of a man's respect for his personal worth is utterly unchristian, for Jesus never treated any person as if he were inferior, incapable, or worthless. He rather saw value in people, and he did his best to make them aware of their worth and importance.

Jesus therefore encouraged appreciation of personal excellence. To his disciples he said, "Ye are the salt of the earth; . . . ye are

the light of the world." He taught a taxgatherer and a fisherman that they were capable of ministering to human need, and he sought out a doctor and caused him to bring healing to frustrated souls.

Our Lord also developed high self-respect in people by revealing that a person is the apex of creation, a child of a loving and divine Father, and has a spiritual mission. Our Lord gave man a sense of partnership with God; and, as John said, he revealed that God has endowed us with the power—the unutterably glorious right—of becoming the sons of God.

15

Faith

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

—Mark 11:22-23

FAITH DEALS WITH VALUES THAT CANNOT BE ADEQUATELY STATED, hopes that resist logical verification, and absolute truths that defy description. While no man can describe faith, one is able to be aware of its existence, be guided by it, and venture to comment upon it.

Mind works in the field of evidences, but faith touches the unseen realm. Faith permits the movement of the soul in the direction of eternal probability. It is valid conviction of the existence of spiritual verities; and it gives assurance that when a person has done his best, he can safely leave his destiny in the hands of God.

It is a singular fact that so many people who claim to be Christians regard the objects of faith as vague or nonexistent. Never-

theless, from one point of view the resources of spiritual power are not such a great mystery. We can know that there is an immanent-transcendent reservoir of divine power that can be used. Moses learned of it in the desert. Isaiah experienced it in the temple. Saul of Tarsus felt its influence when he saw Stephen die, as he traveled on the road to Damascus, and while he was an apostle of Christ. Huxley was aware of it when he recognized the Eternal. Booth and Bach, Florence Nightingale and Baden-Powell, released its energy through the Salvation Army, the console, the Red Cross, and the Boy Scout movement. Spiritual truth, released as applied good will, made Moses surpass the Pharaohs, Paul excel the Caesars, Francis of Assisi eclipse the medieval popes, Pasteur tower over Napoleon, and the kingdom of Christ become infinitely greater than the Roman Empire. But above all others Jesus knew this source of power and kept his life charged with it.

Our Master had implicit faith in God. He never questioned the existence of God. For Jesus, God was a Father to whom he turned constantly, with whom he moved intimately, and in whom he trusted implicitly.

Jesus also had faith in man. It was through his perfect faith that our Lord found proof of man's immortality, for such proof cannot be had from knowledge of the physical world only. In nature we observe facts and sequence. The acorn grows into the oak; the caterpillar passes through the chrysalis stage and becomes a butterfly; the child grows toward maturity of mind and body; food satisfies organic hunger; tones satisfy the ear; color pleases the eye. Nevertheless, one cannot find in natural phenomena proof of the human soul or an affirmative answer to

the persistent craving of the soul for immortality. But Jesus knew man's spiritual nature. He knew the immortal nature of a person. The infinite value of the human soul was therefore a primary motivation of his ministry. He constantly taught that a person—any person, whatever his status in relation to human standards—is of infinite worth.

Jesus, moreover, had faith in the ultimate triumph of truth. His work was hindered by every conceivable obstacle. His death, resulting from hideous injustice, perpetrated by tradition, ignorance, envy, and hate, seemed to effect complete failure of his mission. But Jesus knew God, and he had confidence. He knew that divine values are imperishable. Our Lord was aware of the fact that he came forth from God, that he ministered in accordance with the will of God, and that his destiny was safe in the hands of God.

16

Divine Power

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

—Acts 2:1-4

BEFORE HIS DEATH JESUS PROMISED HIS DISCIPLES THAT THE HOLY Spirit would be sent; that it would be a comfort to them, give them understanding, and enable them to do wonderful things. They likely did not understand what he meant until Pentecost, when memorable events occurred.

The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. It is probable that they were in complete sympathy in tragedy, grief, frustration, receptiveness, and humility. It is of no major consequence whether or not the Holy Spirit appeared as a mighty wind and a visible flame. One cannot explain or define satisfactorily those

conditions that are of most significance in experiences of such a nature. What is physical reality? What is life? What is mind? Why does a blade of grass grow? Does one examine a mother's love with a microscope, balances, or a slide rule? Can mercy, compassion, and right be reduced to logical deductions or arrived at by mathematical formulas? The important fact is that the disciples were prepared to receive the Spirit of God and it came upon them. They knew that something happened to them. Perhaps it was the realization that their leader was not merely Jesus the man but Jesus Christ the living truth. Anyway, they recognized their own importance and their great mission under their eternal and ever-present spiritual leader. Such awareness is not unlike a mighty wind and a tongue of flame.

The disciples then became bold and proclaimed the truth. A great idea makes one bold. Men become obsessed even when the idea is a dangerous one, and show fanatical determination in promoting it. Hitler was so enamored of the Nazi concepts that his leadership inspired millions of his countrymen with fanatical zeal. Communism so stirred Lenin that he established a movement of such power that it threatens to engulf the world. In the realm of humanitarian motivations scientists have passionately sought and proclaimed facts; statesmen have formulated Magna Chartas of human rights; philosophers have courageously speculated, and then formulated ideas and taught truths; Christian missionaries, at peril of their health and life, have gone to the ends of the earth. At Pentecost the disciples experienced the force and the purging flame of truth, and they then proclaimed the word of God. To the crowd about them, and wherever they went, they preached Jesus Christ. They knew the imperishable

truth, and they offered no substitute for it. For them the gospel was not theory, tradition, dogma, expediency, numbers, or organization—it was Jesus Christ, Saviour.

The fruits of their work, done under the motivation of the Spirit of God, are imperishable. The products of a person's labor should be tested in the crucible of the living truth. Are the end results of one's efforts temporary and transient only? All material accomplishments will eventually vanish; but those who work with God in establishing spiritual reality have assurance of permanent accomplishments. We know nothing of any buildings, viaducts, highways, or temples constructed by the disciples; but under the direction of the Holy Spirit they built a permanent structure consisting of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." And at the present time we know that unless the human family builds civilization of such divine materials, it will become self-destructive.

17

Divine Precepts

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. . . .

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

—Matthew 6:19-33

JESUS CHRIST IS THE INFALLIBLE SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY. HIS PRECEPTS are statements of principle. For example, the command, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," includes three imperatives.

Our Lord affirms that a person must seek. Response to need is essential to life, and sane initiative is necessary to human progress. A living organism must employ effort to support itself and to maintain its kind. The human mind develops properly only through persistent voluntary exercise. Culture is promoted by

earnest toil. Wisdom is a product of hard labor. Saintliness is achieved by discipline in doing the will of God. Our Lord, with complete understanding, proclaimed the moral law of personal alertness.

Our Master also asserts that the high purpose of human effort is the search for the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the domain of truth. Whatever, therefore, a person's field of work, his primary objective must be the discovery of the truth. Anything else is partial, inadequate, restrictive, defeatist, and ultimately dangerous; and any person, any institution, or any state that disregards the truth, or that makes the truth a secondary consideration, violates a spiritual principle and promotes evil. That is why Jesus warned against undue loyalty to rules of conduct as such, and that is why he exposed the evil practices of the men who gave the letter of the law priority over the living truth. Our Lord is the perfect earthly revelation of the truth, for his life was in complete harmony with the will of God.

Finally, our Master requires righteousness. Righteousness is right living, and right living demands that one's ability and opportunities be devoted to interests that promote human life. It includes, for illustration, enlightened and active devotion to justice, honor, honesty, mercy, and love.

Jesus himself is the perfect example of righteousness. He grew in wisdom, until his insights were clear and his judgments perfect. He was the essence of love, and he passionately loved people. He was the embodiment of unselfishness, of courage, of gratitude, of graciousness, of honor, and of every other noble virtue. He

was alert to every condition and opportunity about him, but his primary interest was the kingdom of God. He constantly proclaimed the truth and endeavored to translate the truth into the development of character and human relations; he went about always doing good.

18

Foundations

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the wind blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

—Matthew 7:24-27

JESUS DECLARED THAT A WISE MAN BUILDS HIS HOUSE UPON A FOUNDATION OF ROCK, WHILE A FOOL ERECTS HIS HOUSE UPON SAND.

A rock represents integrity. It is a solid unit formed by the action of intense heat and immense pressure upon enduring materials. Solid human character is thus wrought in the mills of life, where the stress and fire of adversity and responsibility remove the dross of ignorance, slothfulness, cowardice, and selfish-

ness and consolidate the refined substances of wisdom, initiative, courage, and charity.

The rock is also a symbol of permanency. It resists pelting rains, lashing gales, and the slow-grinding mills of time, for it is solid, hard, and massive. It supports enormous weight and withstands vast strain. A great life likewise encounters irritating problems, crushing burdens, and cyclonic evils. It possesses abiding qualities indispensable to righteousness, and it defies death because good is imperishable.

The rock, moreover, typifies universality. It is composed of substances elementary to the physical order; and it is so much a part of the natural realm that its unity, its mass, and its stability depend upon cosmic substances and law. A great life exists in the natural sphere; it is also of the spiritual realm, and consists of spiritual attributes such as justice, love, beauty, and goodness. It conforms to principles emanating even from God himself.

Men, institutions, and nations must build. If they foolishly rely upon the dust of falsehood, the quicksand of sensuousness, the beaches of scientism, and the drifts of national paternalism, that which they build will inevitably fall into ruin and become the lair of some monster. If, however, they build wisely upon the unshakeable truths of a moral universe, the structures they erect will endure safely whatever adversity they may encounter. Our Lord Christ said so; and he knew.

19

The Foundation of Righteousness

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

—Luke 10:25-29

THE STORY OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN SHOWS THAT A SAFE SUPER-structure must rest upon a solid foundation. All particulars of the story and the sequel to it rest upon the two bedrock commandments.

A tragic and representative condition prevailed. Bandits infested the countryside. A victim of assault and robbery lay on the highway. Yet criminals abound no less in our own society. One has only to note statements by J. Edgar Hoover and

others concerning juvenile delinquency and adult depravity to become aware of present conditions of evil, both within the law and outside of the law.

Now abundant helpful resources existed for the wounded man. As he lay by the road, the Levite, a representative of the law, passed by. The Levite was a keen observer, and he possessed intelligence and legal authority. The priest, a representative of the temple, came by. He possessed scholarship, religious reputation, and ecclesiastic authority. The Samaritan, likewise, brought fine resources; for he had oil, wine, skill, a beast of burden, money, and credit.

Today civil law and government, religious leaders and institutions, money, food, clothing, education, and medical science are available. No thoughtful person condemns wealth, skill, physical equipment, or any other useful possession or practical accomplishment; for such may be instruments of righteousness. Some of us wonder, however, what is now actually the value of some types of education, skills, and other such matters to tragic human situations. For, when our resources are so abundant, why are tragedy, confusion, and frustration so prevalent? The twentieth century is as full of tragedy and disaster as it is of safety and success.

Only the Samaritan ministered to the suffering man. Why was it that he alone played the role of neighbor? Jesus made the answer clear. Whether the Samaritan professed anything at all we do not know, and, after all, that is a secondary consideration. What does matter is the fact that he had the unaffected, compelling love which knows no artificial boundary lines. This in itself is a confession of faith—"faith working through love."

While local covenants and international agreements are necessary, and while means of enforcement of law are imperative to a local society and to a world federation, the great problems of human relations will never be solved by rules, resolutions, isms, or any other purely human device. They will be solved when the people of the world love God and love each other with that love which redeems intelligence and gives direction to all of human life.

Christian Resolution

And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

—Matthew 8:19-22

IN THE TRENCHANT SENTENCE, "FOLLOW ME: AND LET THE DEAD bury their dead," our Lord shows that he expects singleness of purpose and unqualified loyalty. Vital resolutions are therefore essential to the Christian way of life.

A Christian is expected, for example, to be intelligent. The worst source and form of human waste is an undeveloped, misdirected, and dissipated human mind. Ignorance is the parent of all sorts of evils that warp thought, misdirect lives, bring conflict, produce immeasurable suffering. Knowledge, however, is a source of virtue, and wisdom is a means of freedom. But a Christian student must resist the charms of educational sirens

and avoid the dupery of glamorous false premises. Whatever the cost in time and hard labor, he must seek the rigid discipline and pursue the sound culture offered by the great masters of thought.

A Christian must resolve to become wisely independent. Now sane independence must not be confused with silly defiance or moronic license, for the spirit of rebellion and foolish radicalism enslaves many people. Some people think, for instance, that the violation of social codes, the disregard of moral standards, or the denial of spiritual principles gives independence. Other people parade a spurious liberty by exhibiting a flabby tolerance or a myopic dogmatism.

A Christian must wisely exercise his capacity for independence. He must accept the moral imperative to study, to evaluate, and to reflect. He will appreciate worthy human achievements; but he will not substitute tradition, opinion, or human authority for truth, for it is the truth that will make him free.

Finally, the Christian must resolve to become idealistic. A thousand transient, exciting interests tend to stifle a person's idealism and restrict his vision to a realm of temporal affairs and prosaic matters.

While practical matters often are indispensable, a life projected solely upon the practical and utilitarian plane inevitably moves toward disillusionment and despair. A Christian must pierce beyond the illusory veil of temporal interests, or he will abuse the fabric of inspiration and lose the substance of faith. He must achieve faith in the Eternal and in himself as personally akin to the Eternal. A Christian must let his soul feast upon the food

proper to it and attain to what Plato calls a "love of the everlasting good" if he would see life in the divine radiance of

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

21

Moral Fiber

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

—Daniel 5:1-4

CRUCIAL HOURS REQUIRE STRONG MEN. MORAL FIBER IS NURTURED by high ideals, formed by noble resolve, and tested in adversity. The Book of Daniel, with swift and graphic plot, shows the growth and power of a man.

As a youth Daniel resolved that he would not defile him-

self. A captive in Babylon, he was subject to the impacts of defeat, humiliation, and despair. He confronted intimidation by a despot, the moral ebb tide of public opinion, and the pressure of social conformity. Jerusalem was in bondage; the temple was polluted; Israel's God was an apparent failure. In the face of such severe forms of adversity Daniel staunchly refused to adopt practices that would weaken him, desert standards that would wisely guide him, or violate a faith that would sustain him. The king's orders, therefore, did not frighten him; the threat of imminent death did not intimidate him. He used good sense, for he said: "I will not defile myself with the king's meat and wine." He had faith, for he affirmed: "My God is able to save me; but if not, I will not bow myself before an idol."

Daniel was subjected to many acid tests, but he never once failed. For instance, Belshazzar, with a thousand of his lords, was holding a drunken feast. Handwriting appeared on the wall—as, in one way or another, it always does. The king sent for Daniel and commanded him to interpret the writing, promising him a rich reward if he did so. Daniel was not afraid of the king and his thousand cohorts. He did not tremble at the responsibility of announcing the truth, for a prophet of God need fear no despot. Daniel therefore spoke boldly and plainly. He first told Belshazzar that he did not want his gifts. He then told the king that he had refused to learn, and therefore was silly; that he was guilty of drunkenness before his people, and thus had betrayed his high office; that he was arrogant toward God and guilty of irreverence; that he had desecrated the holy vessels

dedicated to God; and that even that very night he had brought his kingdom to ruin and his people to disaster.

Belshazzar and his associates arrogantly substituted license for liberty. adopted practices that were beyond all reason and decency, imposed upon themselves repulsive forms of slavery, and met death disgracefully. Their condition reminds one of Thucydides' report of a situation related to Corcyra: "The seal of good faith was not divine law, but fellowship in crime. . . . Neither faction cared for religion; but any fair pretence which succeeded in effecting some odious purpose was greatly lauded. . . . But the cleverer sort, presuming in their arrogance that they would be aware in time, and disdaining to act when they could think, were taken off their guard and easily destroyed." But Daniel had faith in God; he was mentally alert; he possessed wisdom and courage necessary to correct evaluation and prophetic expression.

Forms of arrogance exist in our country. There is nevertheless much more good than bad in our people; the good needs to be aroused and set into action. Men of solid character whom God can use as prophets to the nation are an imperative need of this hour.

22

Human Confusion

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.

And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

—Luke 19:41-44

MODERN EDUCATION PRODUCES FRUSTRATION. THE PRESENT GOAL OF education is not so much truth and wisdom as it is cash and success. The emphasis is upon material interests, technical facts, and professional expertness—all of which are, of course, highly commendable within their proper sphere. The trouble is that education does not stress spiritual truth and moral discipline; as a result youth is as a ship at sea without rudder, compass, or a view of the polestar. Information is a giant, while wisdom is a

pygmy; and with the instruments of potential destruction at our disposal we are as children playing in a room filled with high explosives. The twentieth century may witness the decline, if not the suicide, of civilization.

Man has lost much of his self-respect. When astronomy reveals the immensity and exactness of the physical universe, man suspects that he is only a trivial particle. Comparative anatomy and comparative psychology arouse the notion that man is only a brute. The discovery of galvanic phenomena associated with thought causes many people to fancy that mind is only an electric by-product of cerebral changes. Such notions give man a dwindling conception of himself, and despite a veneer of boldness he feels that perhaps

The play is the tragedy, "Man,"
And its Hero the Conqueror Worm.

In addition man has suffered a failure of the nerve of his faith. For many people the soul is a fiction, and God a phantom at their own personal disposal. It is reasonable to say that there can be no sound character without elemental concepts of God and man, but the present generation has been betrayed into discrediting such concepts. And many present institutions of our civilization are, as Mortimer Adler states, like the "walls of an empty house which will collapse under pressure from without because of the vacuum within."

Our Lord Christ calls us today to the enormous task of bringing relief to a world weary and frustrated. No greater challenge can come to us.

23

Immaturity and Obscurity

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

—Mark 10:17-23

LIFE OFFERS A SERIES OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHOICES. A PERSON succeeds or fails according to the manner in which he meets

inescapable crises. There are people who possess unusual ability but who fail because of one weakness. The young man who came to Jesus had one fault.

This man had many excellent characteristics. He had enthusiasm, for he came running. He was respectful and reverent, for he knelt before Jesus and called him Master. He was intelligent, for his question was profound. His material resources were large, and his social status was enviable. He also reflected moral cleanliness, because he had kept the law.

Life brings acid tests. Our Master, always wisely observant, applied a severe test. He told the man to sell what he had and give to the poor. Now Jesus never advocated communism or any foolish attitude concerning material possessions; nor did he ever encourage thriftlessness, or approve any person who refused to respect property. He simply told the young man that if he was to have eternal life, he must honestly confront the human situation, lose himself completely in devoted self-abandon, and commit himself unreservedly to the relief of human confusion and perplexity. In effect Jesus said to him: "Follow me. Do what I am doing: clothe the naked in body; feed the poverty-stricken in mind; remove manacles of illness; visit the unfortunate; bring hope to those in despair; and proclaim the goodness of God."

The young man could not endure the test. He lacked one thing—ethical maturity. His moral courage was not adequate to the rigors of high moral responsibility. His ethical vision was so poor that he failed to recognize supreme intangible values. He therefore did not have the faith of Socrates in view of death, the devotion of Paul to people in need of spiritual

guidance, the strong fiber of Jane Addams in her work in the slums, the determination of Florence Nightingale as a nurse in the Crimea, or the courage of Dorothea Dix in her ministry to the mentally ill. He simply lacked the capacity necessary to make a great decision at the crucial moment. So he walked away—into obscurity.

24

Folly and Retribution

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

—Matthew 7:6

A PERSON IS A CITIZEN OF THE MORAL UNIVERSE. HE IS AS SUBJECT to moral principles as he is to natural law. Jesus knew the requirements of the moral order, and he therefore spoke plainly of the nature of folly and its bitter fruit. In one short sentence he stated three facts.

He asserted that a person has priceless treasures. Health, for example, is a source of energy, initiative, and effectiveness of body and mind. Mind is the superlative endowment which provides meaning, evaluation, appreciation, ideas, hope, and freedom. Time gives opportunity for growth, vision, and achievement. A good name is more precious than fine gold, for it is a basis of self-respect, confidence, and friendship. A person's spiritual nature is the source of his faith, the subjective cause of his belief in God, the inspiration of the hope which makes life worth while, and the guarantee of immortality. Our Lord regarded such treasures as holy and sacred.

The Master also knew that a man can subject his great treasures to extreme abuse. He knew men who threw them to swine, which, having no appreciation of real values, trampled them with their dirty, sharp, cloven feet in the sties in which they fed and bred, wallowed and grew fat. Thus organic needs become perverted into intemperance, and good health is lost. Emotion, a source of joy and sympathy and compassion, frequently becomes an ugly, swinish monster. Mental capacity, the fount of culture and progress, often sinks into the mire of vulgar imagination, selfish interests, and evil habits. Very little time and a minimum of effort are needed to lose a good name, destroy a mind, or disgrace a home. Swine trample swiftly and mercilessly.

Jesus realized and proclaimed that folly brings retribution. One cannot violate moral law with impunity. Swinish evil turns upon man and tears him apart. The unclean beast attacks, wounds, and leaves man to suffer. Selfishness suppresses benevolence; arrogance attacks tolerance; materialistic devotions enshroud hope; intemperance wastes resources and locks doors of opportunity; ignorance breeds fears; spiritual impoverishment fosters hopelessness and despair. The severest agonies that man endures are fruits of the waste of his priceless pearls.

25

Judgments and Judgment

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

—Matthew 7:1-5

THOUGHT PRODUCES JUDGMENTS. EVALUATION IS A NATURAL AND proper function of the mind. Jesus pointed out, however, that when a person judges, he becomes both a witness and a jurist with reference to himself. That is why Jesus taught the seriousness of human verdicts.

A person's judgments make him a witness in regard to himself. They reflect the quality of his mind, for a man thinks in terms of his mental development. His meanings, evaluations,

and decisions grow out of his experiences, memories, and established habits of thought. His judgments show that his mind is developed or undeveloped; that it is filled with valuable facts and great ideas or cluttered with error and false opinion; that it is cultured and honorable or uncouth and base. It is a truism, therefore, that whenever a person expresses a judgment he reveals something of the condition of his mind. For example, what is his reaction to birds, flowers, trees, and sunsets? What is his opinion of Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Dante, Shakespeare, Robert Browning? Does he appreciate Michelangelo, da Vinci, Corot, Millet? Does he find joy in the companionship of Socrates, Plato, Kant, Locke, and Spinoza? What is his bearing in the presence of officials in high positions, and what is his attitude toward people of unfortunate circumstances? What claims his attention? What gives him pleasure? What makes him angry? Whether it is his simplest opinion or his choice of companions, the decision is an expression of the person's mind.

A person's judgments also make him a judge of himself. His decisions are verdicts upon his moral nature. They reveal his sense of right and wrong, of fairness and unfairness, of justice and injustice, of benevolence and selfishness. They show his attitude toward work, property, and time. They often indicate prejudice and vindictiveness, or love, mercy, and humility. It is an unpleasant fact that our judgments are so intimately related to our own natures and responsibilities that any adverse verdict we impose upon another person in some measure condemns us. We have no respect for a person who punishes another man for a crime which he himself committed; but under what

circumstances can we justly claim complete freedom from guilt?

Common sense and ethics demand that we ask ourselves searching questions. Am I, directly or indirectly, responsible for some person's failure? Who teaches a child bad manners, poor taste, profane speech, and crude habits? Who leads a youth into immoral interests, intemperance, and crime? Who helps place prison stripes upon men? Who causes a feeling of inferiority and a lack of ambition? Who cultivates prejudice, intolerance, and hate? Who is responsible for the quality of our communities, our educational standards, conditions of our government, the status of our religion? Our indifference toward our responsibility and our attempts to deny our part in shaping human lives are plain verdicts of moral immaturity and ignorance of moral law. Jesus thus spoke clearly about the matter: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Judgments, moreover, set days of judgment. Jesus declared that "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." The high court of the moral order never recesses. It has full jurisdiction over every part of our lives, and its decrees are inescapable. Correct discernment of facts leads toward accurate meaning; accurate meanings make possible sound reasoning; valid reasoning is essential to wisdom; wisdom is awareness of the truth; knowledge of the truth is a source of freedom; achievement of freedom constitutes human progress. The converse obtains, for stupidity and unwisdom foster error and cause degeneration. People waste or wreck their lives through ignorance, bad decisions, and false steps. A person may or may not

recognize factors that influence him to choose the road leading eastward instead of that leading westward, but his destination is determined in the act of choice. The judgments one makes determine whether he becomes unlearned or cultured, a politician or a statesman, an educational expert or a great educator, a humble servant of his church or a devout and courageous preacher of the gospel of God. Decisions are made; verdicts occur; destiny is established.

Through human judgments made in a moral universe, the judgment of God is pronounced upon every person and every institution.

26

Stupidity and Condemnation

The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.

And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

—Matthew 16:1-4

ANY PERSON WHO TRIFLES WITH THE TRUTH IS A FOOL, FOR THE abuse of advantage brings failure. The account of the behavior of the Pharisees toward Jesus is an example of mental perversion, moral imbecility, and impending condemnation.

The men were with Jesus. Association with great persons is an invaluable experience. We seek great men in homes, offices, forums, colleges, and churches; we undertake to know them as they are found in books, science, philosophy, and theology;

and, in faith, we hope to be with them in the place our Father has established for us in heaven. The Pharisees and Sadducees were in the presence of the world's greatest person. As the greatest of teachers, he could have told them of human problems and needs and advised them how to appreciate values, exhibit wise leadership, and lighten the personal and social burdens of their people. Moreover, as the Christ, the son of God, he could have spoken to them of the nature of mercy, justice, love, and the perfect will of God. But these men, however near physically, were so far away in attitude and purpose that they neither saw nor heard the Christ.

The men abused their exceptional advantages. They had information, but they sought no wisdom. They were social leaders, but they did not inquire about ways and means of helping their fellow countrymen. They were religious officials, yet they did not seek divine truth and guidance or express a desire to do the will of God. They discredited wisdom by resorting to cleverness; they violated their obligations of leadership by substituting selfish scheming for the lofty motivation of statesmanship; they profaned their religious position by assuming that God is a showman; they insulted Jesus by requesting him to compromise his divinity.

Jesus condemned their motives, their mental puerility, their circumscribed interests and practices. He knew that they sought spectacular demonstration and seemed to disregard the more commonplace human burdens—illness, mental derangement, social inequity, poverty, criminality—around them. He observed their selfish plots when Israel was in grave need of prophetic guidance and Jerusalem was approaching destruction. He saw

that they placed ceremony above ministry, the letter of the law above truth, technical rules above love, and that true to type they expected God to manifest himself by means of some trick. Jesus therefore called them hypocrites—expert at trivial affairs and negligent of major situations.

The verdict was just. It should have been a warning to those persons in Christian history who arbitrarily dictated creeds and dogmas and obscured the Christ with the fog of opinion and prejudice; to leaders of the Inquisition who decreed mental and physical torture and death; to those who fought science, and thus helped retard civilization and promote conflict between science and religion; to the men who objected to the open Bible, freedom of thought, and the right to worship according to the dictates of conscience. It should have been a warning to the rich and powerful Russian Orthodox Church and to all Protestant and Catholic leaders in Europe and America prior to 1914. Ecclesiastical leaders of our civilization did not observe the "signs of the times" in 1914 or in 1938, and the moral judgment upon them is an awful one. Perhaps a few persons now hear the terrible horsemen—War, Famine, Pestilence, Death—mounting their steeds again.

The record contains this terrible indictment—and warning: "And he left them, and departed."

27

Closed Doors

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

—Matthew 25:1-12

JESUS USED PLAIN STORIES IN TEACHING IMPORTANT LESSONS. HE knew that many people through neglect permit the doors of opportunity to be closed and locked against them, so he used the story of the foolish virgins to portray opportunity, neglect, and tragedy.

The young women had ability, time, and fortunate circumstances. They knew the bridegroom would return, had access to resources essential to their preparation for the celebration, and they naturally hoped to be welcomed at the place of feasting and happiness. Young people rightly expect to make friends, build good homes, gain prestige, and participate in important affairs. They often feel that at the proper time they will find doors of opportunity wide open to them; for, knowing ways in which other people succeeded, they rely upon their family heritage, social status, club membership, and personal charms. Some people expect cleverness, money, or influential friends to furnish them admission to the inner sanctuaries of life. There are those who rely upon luck, assume that sheer will power is sufficient, or depend upon the notion that when occasion requires, they can experience complete reformation of attitude, motives, and habits, and thus be ready for any emergency. It must be said also that numerous religious institutions rest in the twilight of smug optimism, waiting for a benevolent Providence to furnish free admission to success and joy.

The five young women were negligent. They had good lamps,

but failed to equip them with oil. They were indifferent to their need, for they slumbered and slept. For them, drowsiness suggested present comfort; capacity gave a sense of security; time induced postponement. They doubtless were naïve, sentimentally pleasant persons, who had, however, no fine sense of values, no discipline in punctuality, no clear vision, no love of work, and no standard of responsibility. They represent the idlers, the drifters, the butterflies, and the opportunists. Their name is legion; they exist in every community. They may be found in colleges, professions, offices, places of amusement, and elsewhere. They discredit common sense, foresight, and effort, yet they wish to receive the best. They have access to good books, laboratories, art, music, and wonderful personalities; they have ability to examine and study the wisdom of the ages and prepare themselves to occupy places of unusual significance. But they are negligent; they postpone, and slumber and sleep.

The door was shut. When opportunity came, the young ladies were unprepared. They knocked, begged, suffered, wept. They had, in effect, bolted the door against themselves. Intelligence cannot be borrowed; character cannot be bought, sold, or given; refusal to learn today forbids understanding tomorrow. The immutable principles of life demand respect; and, to the unprepared, opportunity can only say, "Depart. I know you not." The judgment is firm in regard to wastefulness of life, and the penalty is the misery of outer darkness. Persons locked on the outside of the vast treasure house of culture are denied appreciation of the exact logic of mathematics, the intellectual facilities of languages, and the charm of literature. They cannot see the dramas of Goethe or Shakespeare, nor can they hear the

music of Beethoven or Bach. They do not feel the inspiration to be found in the artistic productions of Phidias, Michelangelo, and Rembrandt. Their inability to comprehend the spiritual wisdom of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and Paul is pitiable.

The supreme tragedy is that the door of so many minds and hearts is closed to the living Christ.

One Talent and Justice

Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

—Matthew 25:24-30

MENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCES APPEAR IN EVERY area of society. Equality exists only in political theory. The par-

able of the talents shows the unfortunate condition of a person of limited resources, and a word should be said in his behalf.

The man who had one talent was unduly conservative. He believed he was a victim of circumstances, was afraid to venture, and felt no obligation to make productive investments. His master regarded him as an inferior person, entrusted him with a small amount of money, and perhaps made him feel incompetent. It is very easy, immoral, and unchristian to discredit a person's ability and to make him timid and fearful. Jesus never made a person feel inferior, impotent, discouraged, resentful, or evasive. He rather inspired, encouraged, and emboldened people. He recognized and used the resources of a lad who had a few loaves and fishes, glorified the limited capacity of a foreign woman who fell down at his feet, and paid a superlative tribute to a financially impoverished widow. Some teachers, and even some churches, offer no inspiration to young men of humble birth; but in contrast Jesus never overlooked, disregarded, or discriminated against any person who came to him for help.

The man in the parable offered serious excuses for having failed to improve that which was entrusted to him. From some points of view his claims were sound. He said that his master was stern, arbitrary, exacting, and unfair. He thus described conditions of human life. Any observing person can list conditions that are severely discriminating. Nature frequently is merciless and cruel in the burdens it imposes, for it brings storms, pestilences, famine, prolonged torture, and death upon the innocent as well as upon the guilty. Millions of persons—the feeble-minded, a host of cripples, a majority of the blind, a large percentage of the sick, a vast number of the mentally

ill—had nothing to do with the circumstances that caused their affliction. Moreover, perhaps half of the human family suffer economic, social, educational, and moral handicaps simply because they were born into adverse situations. Many of them are so unfortunate that they have had no opportunity to develop a desire to seek better circumstances. Unscrupulous leaders and false ideologies have made millions of people the innocent victims of wars, and have doomed countless numbers to inaction, fear, and suffering.

Why was the poor man called an unprofitable servant and then cast out? If he was a victim of circumstances, why did he merit punishment? The answer is to be found in two facts which our Lord recognized and taught. First, man is a spiritual person, in some measure a free moral agent; and second, God is just. Every person capable of thinking is subject to the moral universe, and he is under obligation, to the extent of his ability, to undertake to do the right thing. It is a hard world, and a man must will to have dominion over it in some way and to some extent. The sin of the one-talent man was that he simply did not try. Natural law does not respect ignorance; moral law requires that a person, whatever his ability, do his best.

Temptation

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,

Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

—Luke 4:1-13

THE ARGUMENTS MADE BY AGENTS OF EVIL ARE OFTEN SERIOUS AND plausible. They include important facts, superior values, attractive reasons, distressing situations, grave needs, effective methods, valuable results, strong loyalties, and fine sentiments. Satan comes to every person as he approached Jesus, in an appropriate and convincing manner.

Jesus appreciated the material heritage, the needs, and the resources of his people. He was familiar with the vision and the labor of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the history of Egyptian bondage, and the long struggle of the Israelites in establishing their homes in Palestine. He felt that under his direction Palestine could enjoy physical prosperity excelling that of any other country. He could thus enable his people to have unusual physical comfort and economic security. The strength of this temptation becomes clear when we survey the achievements of modern science and technology. Such men as Galileo, Pasteur, Jenner, and Edison are honored and honorable, and their accomplishments are invaluable.

Our Lord also respected Israel's political heritage. He was proud of the statesmanship of Moses, Joshua, and David. He was

familiar with his country's contributions to law, literature, speculative thought, and religion. He saw his people in bondage to Rome, and he observed every type of political restriction and society inequity. What more important work could he do than that of freeing Israel from Rome, giving Israel a Magna Charta, establishing a condition of social justice, and then making his political ideology prevail throughout the world? As in our country the founding fathers attained lasting honor, so Jesus knew that by means of the political contribution he was able to make he could surpass Moses, Pericles, and Caesar, and thus gain the enduring homage of his people.

Official religious leadership offered enormous possibilities. The wealth of sacred literature, inspired codes, majestic prophecies, and hallowed tradition could be preserved, enlarged, and proclaimed to the world. A powerful religious leader could remove social burdens, inspire hope, and establish national unity and stability. Jesus realized that he had the personality, the intelligence, and the wisdom necessary to attract and lead every type of person. He could outthink the highest church officials, and he could draw the common people to him. Why should he not use his ability to build the most powerful official ecclesiastical organization imaginable? Why should he not establish a reputation and an authority surpassing those of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea? Why should he not issue official encyclicals decreeing moral thought and conduct for all times, places, and people, and thus direct the human family out of ways of error, inefficiency, and conflict?

Our Lord knew that materialistic achievement, however extensive and useful, is never an end within itself. We now

realize something of the rightness of the assertion that man cannot live by bread alone, for we know that man can destroy civilization by the use of atomic fission and bacteria. Jesus also understood that government must be used as a means only, and never as an end within itself. He understood that arbitrary political authority, international agreements, and high courts and leagues can never produce world brotherhood and justice. The Master realized, furthermore, that religious codes and organizations can never suffice, for the kingdom of God must grow and prevail in the human heart. He knew that above all physical accomplishments, political organizations, and religious groups, there must be awareness of God and consecration to him. He knew that his mission was that of revealing God, and he therefore could not compromise by devoting himself to a less important objective.

30

Distances

And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?

—Mark 14:32-37

DISTANCE—SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL—HAS BECOME AN INCREASINGLY fascinating subject. Physicists speak of the extent of interstellar space and of the speed of celestial bodies. Geologists measure strata and estimate geological eras. Rapid transportation and swift communication, it is said, have made the nations into one

small world. There are, however, other important types of measurement.

There are social, economic, political, and moral distances. One limited geographic area may embrace wealth and poverty, culture and ignorance, purity and contamination, security and fear. What is the distance between honesty and dishonesty, loyalty and betrayal, honor and dishonor, statesmanship and cleverness, love and hate, humility and arrogance, unselfishness and selfishness? Abraham and Lot stood together even at the altar, but Abraham looked toward the mountains while Lot faced Sodom. Our world is now small physically, but nations are centuries apart through fear, suspicion, and hate. The world must be measured in terms of the size of its moral problems and according to standards of ethical principles.

The gospel narrative gives an amazing case in point. The record states that Jesus went ahead, while the disciples followed. What was the distance, in vision, initiative, and courage, between the divine leader and the human follower?

Jesus knew what was going on about him. The agents of evil were gathered. Judas had betrayed him. Theological enemies had made plans to capture him, and their political forces were poised to strike. A murderous mob was forming. The crowd was prepared to clamor for his death and gloat over his suffering. What was the distance between Jesus and those instruments of evil?

Our Lord had to make a supreme decision. Should he quit his mission, compromise, and slip away into the security of oblivion? Or must he go to a cross and suffer bodily torture, mental anguish, and apparent infamy in order to establish ulti-

mate proof of his love and loyalty to God, to man, and to righteousness? The choice was one he himself had to make, for he had said of his life: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." He fell upon his face, and in utter agony he suffered so intensely that he sweated drops of blood. A stone's throw away his disciples slept. What is the distance between him who suffered such anguish of soul and those who were unconcerned enough to seek forgetful sleep?

Not far away was Pilate, so low in moral stature that he would not support justice. What is the space between an official who in the interest of expediency evades duty, becomes party to an evil, and presumes to wash his hands of guilt and a man who accepts death on a cross rather than violate his divine mission?

Our Lord chose, as he had always done, to do the will of God. He arose and in complete serenity met his enemies, went to his trial, and with the majesty of God walked through the portals of death. How far from such divinity are betrayal, desertion, abuse, torture, mockery, murder?

A stone's throw? Some distances must be measured in terms of eternity.

31

Results of Worship

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

—John 4:19-24

DIVINE WORSHIP IS THE REVERENT ADORATION OF GOD. WHEN IT occurs, it is essentially an experience with God which effects personal transformation.

Worship starts a process of cleansing. When one realizes the presence of the Lord, he desires to rid himself of the impure,

the ugly, and the false; he yearns for the good, the beautiful, and the true; he wants his life to conform to the will of God. When Isaiah saw the Lord, he cried out: "Woe is me! . . . I am a man of unclean lips." When the centurion met Jesus, he said: "I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof." When Saul of Tarsus became aware of Christ, he was purged of the clogging impurities of arrogance, provincialism, and bigotry.

Worship also restores the soul with a corrected perspective of life. It enables us to see the secondary and the temporal in their proper setting and to look upon the real and the permanent with clearer vision and calmer security. For instance when Ezekiel saw "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord," he did not gloat over his attainments, whine about his misfortunes, nor boast of Hebrew accomplishments. He fell upon his face in reverent adoration. When Job heard the eternal God say, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" he recognized the majesty and the glory of the Eternal. When Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up, his soul resounded with the mighty, divine symphony: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

Finally, worship brings to consciousness a sense of personal dignity. It makes one realize that he is a man and that he must play a man's role on the stage of God's world. It arouses a desire for enlarged vision, and it stirs one into action in the interest of righteousness. Worship makes one yearn to devote himself to some great and worthy enterprise, for it causes him to feel that he is a son of God.

Moses worshiped, and felt called to lead his people out of bondage. Isaiah worshiped, and said: "Here am I; send me."

Saul worshiped and then, despite torture and imminent death, proclaimed the gospel. And when we discover the Lord Christ—with his peerless wisdom, his matchless graciousness, his perfect justice, his unfailing compassion, his boundless love, and his unfaltering faith—we shall feel impelled to do his holy will.

32

Have Dominion

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

—Genesis 1:26-28

THE INSPIRED WRITER OF GENESIS STATES MAN'S UNIQUE NATURE and lofty responsibility. He affirms that God created man a spiritual person, placed him in a vast world, and charged him to have dominion over it. How does man exercise such sovereignty?

Man uses his authority in discovering natural resources and inventing channels of progress. He surveys atoms and stars, harnesses streams, charts the seas and the air, and draws upon rich stores of fuel, metals, and gems. He not only calls plant and

beast and fowl by name but also improves their stature and quality. He uses his divinely imparted privilege to lighten economic burdens, control diseases, increase insights, and substitute law for superstition.

Man gains dominion, moreover, of his own inner world as well as the world outside himself through the use of his capacity of appreciation. A person's mind enables him to observe facts, understand relations, evaluate situations, and form concepts. It permits him to enjoy the wealth of external sources of beauty—flowers with their delicate tints and subtle odors, gray hills and painted clouds and watchful stars, crags and glens and leaping streams, a thrush singing softly to her young, and the ineffable accent of a mother's voice. Through creative genius a Bach uses principles of harmony in producing immortal music; a Michelangelo perfects objects of art; a Homer sings matchless drama. Such human perception and aesthetic achievement are evidence of the mind's dominion over matter.

Man also gains dominion over the world through becoming aware of truth and personal worth. Unless a man exercises his capacity for moral insight and spiritual power, the mastery of things and the enjoyment of sensuous interests may make of him a hopeless slave.

The supreme goal of intelligence is the apprehension of reality. Mental impoverishment is a source of weakness; spiritual ignorance is the author of slavery. As Milton says:

He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts

Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

The highest form of dominion is achieved through recognition of and reliance upon the truth. A wise person sees the world in the light of truth, and he consequently has confidence in his ability to interpret, to reflect, and to reshape the world about him with wisdom that transcends object, place, and time.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" to him who has learned the language of their author. And a spiritually enlightened person understands, as did Paul, that out of the divine creative process, which involves long travail, come at last the sons of God.

Seed and Harvest

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to

the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.

And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

—Acts 17:1-9

ONE WHO PLANTS GOOD SEED WORKS IN HARMONY WITH NATURE'S productive forces. A person who sows great ideas conforms to high standards of mental growth. A man who teaches the truth labors in agreement with the principles of the moral universe. At Thessalonica, Paul sowed the seed of spiritual reality.

Paul therefore planted wisely. A sane farmer selects and uses the best available seed, for germination, growth, and harvest are inherent in the seed. In view of the harvest he hopes eventually to make, he chooses only plants of the finest strains. Paul planted the seed of the gospel. He knew that the gospel is Jesus Christ. Therefore, at Thessalonica he did not substitute Jewish law, religious ritual, current economic formulas, or any other subject for the gospel. He did what any wise preacher does; he preached the gospel—Jesus Christ himself.

Now planting involves problems. It requires effort, and the planter encounters obstacles. One who plants great ideas struggles with the baked soil of inertia, the infertile shale of indifference, the arid sand of empty sentiment, and the hard flint of prejudice. Moreover, he learns that the struggle for survival and growth occurs in the moral field as well as in the plant and

animal kingdoms, for opposition arises to a person who tries to substitute freedom for bondage. People cling to superstition, hold on to outmoded customs, and fight for vested interests. Mental inertia often restrains them; moral prejudice frequently obscures their vision; religious bigotry usually makes them intolerant and cruel. Such obstacles have hindered the progress of education, medicine, religion, and every other great enterprise. And, as was the case at Thessalonica, the enemies of truth and righteousness generally make their attacks by appealing to the crowd in the name of social security, racial prejudice, patriotism, and religion. Paul preached the gospel; prejudice flamed; a mob formed; innocent persons suffered; Paul was forced to leave the city.

But however weak or obscure or defeated it may appear at the time, the truth is strong, imperishable, and ultimately triumphant, while evil, however successful and powerful it may seem, is self-destructive. Paul had planted the seed of the truth. He had "reasoned with them out of the scriptures . . . that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." He left Thessalonica in apparent defeat, but years later he found himself writing these words to a group of devout Christians at Thessalonica: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." Paul therefore saw fruits of the seed he had planted at Thessalonica, and he was glad. If he could have observed the results of his labors as they appeared

in Europe and in the Americas during the next nineteen centuries—in art, literature, colleges and universities, churches, hospitals, orphanages, political rights, religious freedom, growing serious efforts to establish a world brotherhood, and, above all, human lives consecrated to Jesus Christ—his heart would have burst with joy.

One who plants the seed of truth in human hearts works with God, and one who works with God promotes the immortal.

34

Crisis and Greatness

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

—John 12:27-28

SEVERE CRISES OFTEN REVEAL STRONG PERSONS AND EXPOSE WEAK ONES. By and large, human life includes exacting conflicts which test the fibers of character. In Gethsemane, Jesus successfully met a supreme crisis.

Gethsemane was a place of final decision. Jesus had worked hard and persistently. He had avoided any form of selfishness, decided against devotion to temporal power, and committed his life to God and to human needs. He had therefore helped the sick, the afflicted, the hopeless, the poor, the bereaved. Wherever he had gone, he had reflected the compassionate love of God and given inspiration, opportunity, joy, and hope. He had not relied upon wealth, armies, or official position for support; he rather depended upon love and goodness. Three and a half centuries earlier Plato had written that a man who was thus genuinely good would be

despised, misunderstood, abused, scourged, have his eyes burnt out, and be impaled. And now, in Gethsemane, Jesus faced such a climax. No man found a fault in him. He was so wise, so kind, so good, and so gracious that inferior, prejudiced men hated him. Evil forces were converging upon him. Judas had betrayed him; religious authorities had ordered armed men to arrest him; disciples were asleep; personal defeat and shameful agony seemed to be his lot. Such is often the situation when a good person meets the selfishness and the other cruel forces of the world. A thoughtful and devout person experiences some type of Gethsemane.

Under such existing circumstances Jesus did the natural thing. He prayed God for relief. We understand him better and love him more because he did that very thing. He enjoyed life; he was devoted to his family and his home; he appreciated his friends; he loved people; he wanted to continue to minister to those in need; he was so unselfish that he had no desire to become a martyr. Moreover, he knew the ugliness of prejudice, hate, cleverness, betrayal, and murder; and he understood the injustice that he would suffer. Why, therefore, should he—innocent, sinless, perfect in motive, grandly humanitarian, tireless in ministry to human need, the gospel of God incarnate—become a victim of a malicious leadership, of a heartless political regime, and of an ignorant mob? What was the sense and the fairness of it all? No wonder that he, in utter agony, prayed, "Father, save me from this hour."

In some fashion our hearts, at one time or another, cry out for relief. Why suffer physical affliction? Why bear heavy and unmerited burdens of anxiety, grief, shame, frustration? Why experience crippling invalidism, social injustice, excruciating pain,

premature death? Why devote one's life to unselfish efforts which, in turn, often provoke ingratitude, jealousy, criticism, and studied opposition? Why not, in some way, slip out of Gethsemane into the smooth current of popular opinion and public approval?

Our Lord elected to do the will of God. With a sense of divine mission and in genuine loyalty to honor, right, and righteousness, he could not compromise. He did not stoop to personal safety and comfort. A principle was in question. The forces of evil had converged; and for him it was either moral retreat or death, courage with honor or compromise with safety. He chose right and honor and courage, and he thus glorified both himself and God. And we, who in some measure understand him, love and respect him because he said to his Father, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

35

Conflict and Harmony

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

—Matthew 6:24-26

JESUS UNDERSTOOD THE PROBLEMS OF HUMAN LIFE. WITH AMAZING accuracy he anticipated modern diagnosis and treatment of types of mental illness arising from mental conflict and tension. In relation to this he said, "No man can serve two masters."

Mental illness is so prevalent that hospitals for psychopathic people are crowded, while many thousands of persons—only a small percentage of whom receive institutional treatment—suffer the milder types of mental derangement. It is also true that while organic disorders are a primary cause of mental disorders, a large number of cases of mental diseases and organic maladies

result from psychic tensions. Physicians and psychiatrists observe numerous cases of hypochondria, hysteria, anxiety, and despondency. Many such patients experience debility, localized pain or anesthesia, peptic ulcers, gastrointestinal convulsions, and ataxias. All these and many other maladies of the class designated as "functional" may be the result of chronic fears, exaggeration of problems, or persistent worry. Textbooks of abnormal psychology are filled with discussions of types of mental sickness resulting from conflict and the organic correlates of such infirmities.

With marvelous insight Jesus knew sources of such mental turmoil. In a brief figure of speech he attributed many of them to interests and objectives that are incompatible, antagonistic, and divisive. He knew the effects of domestic discord, social ambition, frustrated hopes, economic insecurity, violation of social conventions, and problems arising from certain types of religious beliefs. It is not difficult, for example, to discover persons who undertake to compensate for disappointment in love affairs, a failure in business, or a lack of social eminence; while so-called inferiority complexes are strikingly numerous, as reflected by the jealous person, the braggart and the bully, and the cringing individual—examples of which can be found in every community.

Our Lord specified methods of preventing and of curing such mental disorders. He never once intimated approval of the iniquitous claim that a person should follow only instinctive impulses, disregard fine social conventions, and grow up to have no inhibitions. He never suggested that a human life can rightly be committed to modes of sensuous gratification only. Rather, he constantly urged a comprehensive view of a person's nature and a high conception of values. In graphic hyperbole he said: "Take

no thought of what you shall eat and what you shall wear." He thus pointed out the primacy of mind over matter and of the spiritual over the temporal. Wealth, position, reputation, health, and comfort are not evil. But they themselves never guarantee happiness, for it is only when one recognizes that his life is based upon the eternal that he finds lasting satisfaction. And when he makes such a discovery, secondary interests fall into their proper place.

Jesus also showed the necessity of self-mastery. A person inevitably confronts people and problems, and in doing so needs such mental and moral discipline as will enable him to conduct himself with noble and manly bearing. If, like Epictetus and Spinoza, he realizes that he is divine, he is inspired and motivated by spiritual dignity that will not permit him to cringe when he meets persons of various social strata, intelligence, wealth, and power. Such a fine sense of respectability furnishes an inner tranquility which thwarts tensions arising from secondary human considerations. Jesus knew that he was the Son of God, and however arduous his burdens and harsh his enemies, he never lost his inner composure.

Our Lord revealed, too, the personal value of unqualified commitment to a great cause. No thoughtful person experiences peace when he is haunted by a suspicion that he is devoted to superficiality and that his life may therefore add up to mediocrity, for such belief brings tormenting division. But who thinks that a William Cary, a Matthew T. Yates, or a Wilfred Grenfell, whatever the hardships such a person may endure, could be torn asunder mentally? It is the playboy, the rootless misfit, the pampered and aimless social butterfly, the persistent egotistic seeker

after selfish objectives, who experience serious conflict. "If . . . thine eye be single," said our Lord, "thy whole body shall be full of light." There will be inner integrity.

Our Master moreover showed the integrating effect of sane belief in God. Such faith provides a goal and a safe anchorage whatever the furious storms that lash with enormous power. Let the superstructure become wrecked and washed away. What does that matter if one has committed his life to God? Jesus knew the Father and committed his life completely to him. When, therefore, all the things of the world seemed to collapse upon him, he was able to say, "I have overcome the world."

36

Gratitude and Ingratitude

And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

—Luke 17:11-17

GRATITUDE IS A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE. UNAFFECTED EXPRESSION OF thanks is evidence of nobility and refinement, while ingratitude is a symptom of depravity and crudeness. The story of the lepers reveals in sharp contrast two types of people.

The ten men were in dire need. They were victims of a loath-

some disease; they suffered the anguish associated with ostracism and hopelessness; they were outcasts and beggars. While these men represent people who experience extreme conditions of physical handicaps, of social tragedy, and of despair, it must be remembered that almost every person, whatever he himself or others think, is in a condition of grave need.

These men received help. They cried out for mercy, and Jesus healed their bodies. He provided relief from despair, restored them to their homes and their friends, and gave them hope and opportunity. They were therefore deeply indebted to their benefactor. Likewise, every member of a civilized society is indebted to those people, ancient and modern, honored and unknown, who, through their devotion and labor and sacrifices, have produced the present helpful features of civilization. We have, for example, great treasures of science and technology, of social mores, of fine arts, of literature and philosophy, and of religious truths; and we enjoy such treasures, which have helped to free us from the jungle's shackles of disease, labor, social enslavement, and superstition.

One of the lepers realized his indebtedness to Jesus and thanked him; nine of them accepted their cure as a matter of course and thus exposed their ill breeding. Such ingrates are the moral progenitors of one of our contemporaries, who presumed to make an estimate of the money, time, and energy wasted by our habit of saying "thank you." They are also akin to those people who, as recipients of numerous forms of aid, never thank their colleagues, their parents, or even God himself. It is such as they who accept the bounties of a community and do nothing for the community; who enjoy the protection and support of their

country and never do anything to promote good citizenship; who accept the benefits of Christian culture and ignore or deride the founder of Christianity. From such as they are bred parasites in time of peace and traitors in time of war. A person devoid of gratitude ignores friends, discourages kindness, and helps reduce the human family to the status of Frankenstein's monster—ungrateful for the gift of life itself. Ingratitude is not only degenerative; it is also the most inexcusable sin in the world. Jesus healed the bodies of the nine lepers, but their ulcerous hearts remained untouched, for in some respects their attitude was worse than that of the brutes.

The grateful man obeyed the impulse of a generous and appreciative spirit. His fine sense of decency and honor caused him to come to the Master and say, "I thank you." Then the Master made this revealing statement to him: "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

Mission and Strategy

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:
be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the
councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for
my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

—Matthew 10:16-18

THE REVELATION OF THE INNER SECRET OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD stimulates our urge to change the world. In one terse sentence our Lord enjoined three responsibilities upon strategists of Christian social change.

A Christian has a mission. Jesus said to his disciples, "I send you forth." A primary criterion of the Christian way is the desire to do something worth while. Our Master expected interest, action, and fruitfulness. He required sane, undivided, and constructive loyalty. He inspired a person to try to rise from contamination to purity, from ignorance to wisdom, from injustice to justice, from matters of minor value to affairs of major significance. Jesus loved God and people so intensely and wisely that whether he dealt with a teacher, a doctor, a fisherman, a

taxgatherer, a housekeeper, or a beggar, he called that person to high levels of personal excellence and usefulness.

The Christian encounters dangers. Evil people surrounded our Lord, hated him, slandered him, tortured and killed him, and then tried to destroy the kingdom that he established. He thus knew those people who, like ravenous wolves, are eager to stalk, attack, maim, and kill. He was aware of the dangers a man encounters when he publishes facts, exposes evils, urges moral excellence, and proclaims living truth in place of established tradition. He knew that ignorance, prejudice, selfishness, and vested interests spurn, abuse, and attempt to destroy wisdom, tolerance, and benevolent effort. We ourselves know that even a casual review of the history of medical science, astronomy, and mental illness discloses innumerable efforts—many of them in the name of the Lord himself—to fight progress in order to preserve the *status quo*. It appears that no great cultural undertaking or wholesome religious movement escapes the attacks of ravenous enemies.

Our Master also specified the nature of Christian strategy. He said that his disciples must be as wise as serpents, thus warning that a Christian must be adequately informed, constantly alert, and fully capable of meeting and successfully attacking any enemy of righteousness. In view of the present dangers arising from indifference, faithlessness, and national ambition implemented with weapons capable of effecting the suicide of civilization, it is inescapably true that a Christian leader is expected to become the best informed, the most highly skilled, and the wisest person. Jesus himself was thus prepared. He met every type of existing situation, but no problem baffled him; no trickster fooled him; no traditionalist blinded him; no subversive agency made a

tool of him; no pomp awed him; and no authority intimidated him. He never sheathed his two-edged sword of intellect and spirit at the threat of a Herod or the command of a Pharisee.

Jesus furthermore said that a Christian must be as harmless as a dove. He thus indicated that a Christian's character must be unblemished, his motives pure, his methods fair, his standards honorable. Our Master himself was the paragon of ethical excellence and of sound judgment. At times he became violently angry, used language that was searing, and expressed unequivocal condemnation; but no person could honestly question his deep sympathy, his boundless love, his profound compassion, and his tender mercy. It was evil, and not persons, that he fought.

The truth never stoops; it is never vindictive; it never retaliates with evil. Our Lord is the perfect embodiment of the spiritual reality which redeems human lives.

38

Religion and Common Sense

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

—Matthew 13:45-46

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION AT ITS BEST STRESSES COMMON sense, the exercise of which is evidence of sound character. Our Lord constantly taught good judgment, and chided men for foolishness more severely than he did for the grosser sins. In the parable of the merchant he states some of the common-sense essentials of Christian growth.

First, the merchant was alert. He used his resources of energy, vision, time, and opportunity. Jesus thus taught the importance of initiative and observation. Our Lord never calls a careless, shiftless, indolent person to an important task, for the very nature of the kingdom of God requires life, industry, and determination at their best. Furthermore, he never asks a person to do a foolish thing.

The merchant also had a superior sense of values. He did not devote himself to the trivial and worthless; he searched for pearls,

and he knew a good pearl when he saw one. One of the greatest sources of waste is the lack of discerning insight; a major tragedy is the foolishness of casting one's pearls before unworthy objects of devotion. Plato says that those "who know not wisdom and virtue . . . are always busy with gluttony and sensuality. . . . Like cattle, with their eyes always looking down, . . . they kill one another by reason of their insatiable lusts." We recognize the need of good judgment in law, engineering, and medicine; we require clear discrimination in the fine arts; we must insist upon intelligent discernment of the treasures of the spiritual realm.

The merchant, furthermore, was a man of action. He had the courage to act upon his insight and to make an all-out investment. When he found the matchless pearl, he consolidated all of his resources and bought it. He recognized the best; he craved the best; he got the best. Inaction in view of opportunity is a symptom of inferior character. Contentment with mediocrity reveals a fear of responsibility and leads to moral stagnation and regression. When one has heard Paderewski and Kreisler and read Plato and Homer, he thereafter seeks men of giant stature. When we discover Christ our Lord, we would fain call him Master.

39

Truth and Freedom

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

As he spake these words, many believed on him.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then ye are my disciples indeed;

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

—John 8:28-32

FREEDOM IS A POSITIVE ATTITUDE, A SENSE OF INDEPENDENCE DERIVED from faith in God. It is a result of the discovery of moral autonomy before God and the disciplined squaring of life with reality.

Man usually seeks freedom through use of his own ingenuity. But freedom within the limitation of human devices alone is as illusory as the dawn of the morning and as destructive as death itself. For example, the sophistry that might makes right results in economic coercion, reliance on physical prowess, and government by totalitarian agencies. The assumption that Utopia would

arise from science led to the theft of atomic fire and threatens to arouse the gods of destruction to unparalleled fury. No serious person believes, as did the Nazis, that the legalistic sophistries of men or the enterprising cunning of power politics produces freedom. The doctrine that the substance of truth is transient and relative lowers man to the status of a rationalizing brute and deletes God from the universe.

Such ideologies, which rest upon the assumption that life has no sanction except human cleverness, cause the vital spirit of man to degenerate into beggary. They permit the flaunting of economic laws and delegated authority; they necessitate international war; and they tempt many religious organizations to devote themselves unduly to vested interests of property, dogmas, and priestly authority.

Our Lord never intimated that genuine freedom consists of the absence of restraints, that freedom can be derived from material and political resources, or that it is a product of human ingenuity. He never assumed that man's puny imagination laid the foundations of the universe, caused the morning stars to sing together, established ethical principles, or sustained the everlasting arms. He proclaimed three foundational truths that are essential to the achievement of freedom—the eternal God, the immortality of human personality, and the moral law.

Jesus knew that only God provides the valid explanation of the universe and gives a person unique meaning and enduring hope. He also knew that the nature of God and the structure of humanity do proclaim the moral law. He was therefore aware that human freedom is grounded in the character of God and in the fellowship of those who practice the ruling sense of his

presence. The spirit of freedom is born when a person realizes that he is a son of God, dedicates himself to righteousness, and becomes captive to the divine. That is one reason why Jesus said: "If ye continue in my word . . . ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The Candle

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

—Luke 8:16-18

OUR LORD USED A CANDLE AS A PLAIN ILLUSTRATION OF THE NATURE and function of a human life.

The candle represents latent power. It thus embodies chemical elements, time, natural law, residues of life, and human design. Likewise a human life contains the substance of stars and atoms; it embraces marvelous types of organic pattern; it possesses the mental capacity necessary to have dominion over the earth; and it has that divine endowment essential to spiritual insights.

The candle also symbolizes energy. The lighted candle transforms latent power into dynamic force. As the electric light depends upon cables, dynamos, streams, rainfall, gravitation, and

the sun itself, so the flame of the candle involves energy related to physical substance, the laws of nature, and the very source of life and power. The proper function of the candle is light—light used in the interest of comfort, industry, progress, safety, and beauty. Jesus thus reveals the comprehensiveness of a human life, the transforming influence of an active personality, and the significance of a man as related to God and God's divine order.

Our Lord declared furthermore that only sane use should be made of a candle. No wise man lights a candle and puts it under a vessel that cuts off the supply of oxygen, extinguishes the flame, and produces foul odor. Only a fool places a lighted candle under a bed, where it is both useless and dangerous. One rather sets a candle in an elevated receptacle, where its light dispels darkness, clarifies objects, provides safety, and reveals beauty.

Just so, no enlightened person is supposed to waste and stifle his capacities. He does not suffocate himself with slothfulness, intemperance, and ignorance; he does not become an agent of social uselessness, moral offensiveness, and ethical darkness; he does not restrict himself with impotent inaction, blinding prejudice, and destructive selfishness. A wise man, to the best of his ability, uses his endowment of body, mind, and spirit in harmony with God's holy will, through the discovery and the revelation of truth, and for the glory of God.

The Spirit of Truth

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

—John 16:12-13

OUR LORD STATES THAT THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH IS A GUIDE INTO ALL truth. What is this guide? In view of persons we have known who were led by the spirit of truth, it is not difficult to designate characteristics of this divine spirit.

The spirit of truth is intellectual honesty, for it requires complete sincerity of motive, recognizes facts, and respects valid inferences. It is the high courage that combats ignorance and misrepresentation and leads us to dare to explore wherever manifestations of truth can be found. It is the idealistic inspiration that encourages persistent effort and demands the highest in professional skill and moral excellence of which a person is capable. It is the altruism that enables us to rejoice at the appearance of a person genuinely superior to ourselves, to be glad when real progress occurs, and to be happy to learn that another

person's fine accomplishments surpass and even supersede our own achievements.

Again, the spirit of truth is sacrificial good will. It is the selfless determination which causes one to lose himself in commitment to some great humanitarian objective. It leads scientists to jeopardize their lives in the study of diseases, makes Albert Schweitzer minister to bodies and souls in an African jungle, and caused a soldier friend of mine to go far beyond the line of duty and risk his life to bring in wounded and dead comrades.

The spirit of truth, moreover, is a motivation to progress. It requires the pursuit of facts, wisdom of interpretation, and development and use of the skills that enabled man to move from the jungle to civilization. Astronomers enlarge our stellar horizons. Men in the fields of economics, business, and statesmanship wrestle with local and international problems. Psychologists probe the human mind in effort to discover its nature and to find means of relief from mental infection and illness. Furthermore, the spirit of truth motivates the best in art, literature, music, and other areas of aesthetic culture.

Finally, the spirit of truth has fostered pioneer missionary zeal. It impels men and women to carry the gospel to every area of the world. From Paul to the present time it has endeavored to establish peace and good will among all people, and to give the human family a Magna Charta of freedom and righteousness.

Jesus and Intelligence

And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

—Luke 2:46-52

MORE THAN ANY OTHER PERSON JESUS EMPHASIZED INTELLIGENCE. He is a clear illustration of how divine truth manifests itself through the medium of human personality.

No one can successfully disclaim the Master's store of general information or discredit the manner in which he used such knowledge. He spoke fluently of seasons, storms, floods, and sunsets. He was familiar with soil, seed, trees, flowers, and fruits. He understood planting, germination, cultivation, harvesting, and preservation; and he knew birds, sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and swine, and used them to illustrate great truths. Moreover, Jesus was acquainted with the manual arts and essentials of architecture, for he spoke of the yoke, the builder's stone, and the nature of foundations. He was aware of personal affairs and domestic situations, for he mentioned children's games, conditions of poverty and wealth, and existing discrimination against women. He also knew the worth, the power, and the dangers of government; he was familiar with religious organizations, knew their value, and exposed their arbitrary authority.

Jesus was a student. He learned invaluable lessons in his home, from his devout mother, and in the synagogues. At twelve years of age he was an alert student whose wisdom astonished the great teachers in the temple. At the outset of his ministry he was at home in any contemporary field of thought. He knew the Scriptures, quoted them freely, and interpreted them wisely. He easily summarized the Hebrew law, and stated its value and its limitations. He stressed the dangers of ignorance and revealed the merits of wisdom, for he knew that ignorance, whatever its form, is perilous and that information, good judgment, and wisdom are essential to righteousness. When we read the illustration of the builder who first counted the cost; examine the account of the houses, the one erected upon sand and the other upon a

rock; study the parable of the talents; analyze the story of the planter who sent his soul to live in his barns; and consider the account of the prodigal son, we discover that Jesus consistently exalted wisdom and condemned ignorance.

Jesus also had a correct sense of values. He never mistook the trivial for the important, the temporary for the permanent, or the artificial for the genuine. Although he never discredited practical affairs, he knew the divine nature and the infinite value of a human life; therefore he placed primary emphasis upon moral purity, ethical excellence, and spiritual maturity.

Furthermore, Jesus was the embodiment of gentility. He moved with princely grace in every stratum of society in which he found himself. Whether he was with the ignorant or the scholarly, the poor or the wealthy, peasant or king, one person or a multitude, he was completely serene. Whether he was the honored guest of a home or with a teacher in the temple, welcomed or threatened, applauded or mocked, he was full of graciousness. He never did anything that was crude, unkind, or dishonorable. Our Master possessed commanding dignity, unaffected refinement, keen sensitivity, inspiring magnetism, uncompromising firmness, and divine humility. He was so gentle that children trusted him, yet he was so austere as to drive irreverent mercenaries from the temple. He did not embarrass a woman, use a woman as an example of evil, or otherwise reflect unfavorably upon her; yet his words flashed like a rapier when directed at hypocrites. With burning sarcasm he called Herod a fox, yet he uttered no word of reproof to Roman soldiers who, in line of duty, tortured him. With righteous indignation he called Pharisees blind guides and

whited sepulchers, but he was so sympathetic that he wept with a bereaved family. He appreciated lilies and birds and sunsets. He immortalized generosity and thoughtfulness and gratitude. He was the wisest, the justest, the kindest, and the best person who ever lived.

43

Jesus and Courage

Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

In your patience possess ye your souls.

—Luke 21:10-19

IN SPEAKING OF MORTAL PERIL A GREAT ATHENIAN SAID: "I CARED NOT a straw for death. . . . My great and only care was lest I should do an unrighteous or unholy thing." As Socrates thus suggests, moral heroism is one of life's finest attributes. Spiritual fortitude is a primary Christian virtue, one which Jesus reflected perfectly.

Jesus courageously met grim conditions of life. During his infancy a jealous and merciless king sought to kill him. He grew up amid the serious and exacting problems of a widowed mother's home and shared the grave responsibilities of the family. He was torn between a sense of divine mission and duty to his mother and his brothers and sisters. He saw the halt, the maimed, the blind, the leprous, the epileptic, and the demoniacal. He observed the publican, the priest, the thief, the harlot, and the hypocrite. He not only knew friends, bold patriots, and devout persons but was also familiar with political despots, religious autocrats, and cold extortioners. Jesus boldly and realistically confronted every type of hardship, suffering, inequity, and discrimination; and he had no fear of facts, nor any inclination to evade human situations.

Our Lord also had the courage to undertake a great mission. He knew human life; he understood the value of a human soul; he was aware of God's goodness, love, and mercy; and whatever the cost, he resolved to do the Father's will. Consequently he turned from his seemingly more immediate duty to his mother and pointed out evils in places high and low, exposed selfishness, arrogance, envy, bigotry, bureaucracy in government and in religion, and sharply contrasted strict adherence to tradition with God's mercy and compassion. Jesus went about doing good wherever he found any person who sought his help. He never quibbled about the cause of an affliction and never vied with an-

other for reputation or temporal power. Our Lord healed the leper, restored sight to the blind, brought joy to the sorrowful, and gave hope to those in despair. For him one act of compassion was worth more than all of the ecclesiastical parade in relieving human suffering and frustration. His meat was to do God's will; and throughout his ministry he never exhibited timidity, never faltered with respect to the course he chose to follow, never evaded a vital issue, never violated a principle of righteousness.

For such a gloriously courageous way of life Jesus paid heavily in the coin of suffering. He gave up his home. His family misunderstood him. His neighbors tried to kill him. Herod, under the influence of an unscrupulous wife and her silly daughter, beheaded his great friend. Clever men constantly undertook to trick him and destroy his influence. Fickle public opinion applauded him at one moment and then clamored for his death. One of his disciples betrayed him; three of them went to sleep during the time of his agony at Gethsemane; one of them, at the taunt of a servant girl, profanely denied knowing him; and all of them except John deserted him in the hour of danger. He defied prejudice in his efforts to heal the sick, to remove ignorance, and to eliminate bigotry. He endured slanderous tongues, felt the sting of the lash, heard insulting mockery. He knew that hate would kill him if he taught the truth. He nevertheless spoke the truth; and prejudice, supported by ignorance, did kill him. But he died so nobly courageous that a Roman officer recognized his divinity.

Jesus and Humility

The same came therefore to Philip, which was to Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, here shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

—John 12:21-26

HUMILITY IS A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE. A HUMBLE PERSON WISELY estimates himself in relation to supreme values and devotions, and he consequently avoids haughtiness, arrogance, and vainglory. Jesus met pride and conquered it with humility.

One day certain Greeks came to see Jesus. He appears to have

experienced joy upon learning that representatives of a distant country, the most cultured area of the world, desired to see him. There was adequate cause for him to glory in such distinction. His reputation now extended beyond Palestine; his brilliance had attracted the peers of speculative thought. Athena's spear not only guided mariners; it also illuminated the deep resources of the intellect. Those Greeks were of the land of Pericles, Thucydides, and Demosthenes; of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes; of Phidias and Ictinus; of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. It was a great honor to be sought out by the Greeks, who had no equals in architecture, art, literature, and philosophy.

Jesus then did an astounding thing—one which in an amazing manner reveals his incredible sense of values, his perfect motivations, and his absolutely unselfish purpose. When pride in reputation as such began to arise, he completely suppressed the inclination and uttered these trenchant and truthful words: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." He thus refused to compromise his divine mission by permitting any type or measure of selfish motive to mar his life and work. The record does not show that he saw the Greeks.

Our Lord knew that vanity is morally prohibitive, degenerative, and corruptive. He hurled caustic invective against proud individuals. He had no patience with men who were dogmatic, who wore long faces, who paraded their piety, or who sought to attract attention to themselves in the synagogue or elsewhere. A cardinal sin of the present time is conceit, the means whereby men

become nothing by thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think. When a man boasts of his genius, proclaims his achievements, seeks applause, or feels "deep satisfaction" at the progress he has made, he would do well to survey existing chaos and imminent dangers, contrast his puny opinions with timeless truth, and reflect upon the humility of Jesus Christ.

Jesus and Righteousness

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

—Matthew 6:31-33

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SPIRIT AND PRACTICE OF RIGHT LIVING. IT IS intelligent devotion to that which is truthful, honorable, and constructive. It is essentially co-operation with God in the preservation and enhancement of moral worth and spiritual value. The attainment of righteousness demands the appreciation and adoption of certain prerequisite conditions.

Righteousness requires hard work. Jesus worked. He selected as disciples men who were at work. In the story of the talents and in the description of the last judgment he plainly showed that the inactive and the indifferent, who waste their ability and opportunity, will suffer outer darkness. There is no place in Christ's kingdom for careless attitudes, limp minds, and lazy bones.

Righteousness also embraces intelligent desire to improve human life. Any person who helps raise the level of human life, through any honorable method of bringing relief or of enabling people to find mental and spiritual freedom, is working with God. Some of us have observed a life unfold in the warm glow of truth. Some of us have felt an inner joy when we helped restore health to a sick body or sanity to an afflicted mind; for when we work with God in promoting the abundant life, such ministry touches the console of the heart and produces ineffable harmony.

Righteousness, moreover, presupposes purity of motive, reverence for that which is higher than ourselves, and loyalty to a great cause. In this connection Jesus pointed out those who obeyed the letter of the law and robbed widows, the arrogant publican, and the self-righteous Simon as concrete illustrations of those whose hearts were impervious to righteousness. And in contrast to them he brought into sharp relief the humble centurion, the penitent Zacchaeus, and the poor widow.

Any person whose work is characterized by a ruling sense of the presence of Christ meets the conditions of righteous living. Some time ago I entered the office of a prominent lawyer as a widow was leaving. The lawyer told me that he was trying to save the woman's estate. He turned to a picture on the wall and said: "That is the pattern to which I try to fit my life." It was a picture of the Good Samaritan. Then his face glowed as he turned to another picture and said: "He is the cause." It was a picture of Christ.

Power and the Gospel

I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

—Romans 1:14-16

PAUL STATES THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL. HE SAYS THAT the gospel is power. Physical power, locked in material substance or released, excites wonder. Life, in amoeba or in man, produces amazement. The penetrative and inventive genius of the human mind, exploring atoms and stars, acquiring information, forming concepts, expressing affection, and implementing faith, arouses astonishment. Paul suggests that Jesus Christ is an incomparable reservoir of spiritual energy.

Paul states that the gospel is unique power. He realized that Jesus Christ is the gospel. He became aware of the fact that when the angel said to the shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," he was proclaiming Jesus, the Christ, the power of whose love would enchant the

minds and transform the souls of men. Physical power operates in the realm of the material world; political power manifests itself in government; ecclesiastical power appears in religious organizations. But spiritual power occurs in the domain of the spirit, and its unique nature transforms human interests and motives.

The apostle not only proclaimed the gospel as power and as the power of God; he said also that it is the power of God unto salvation. Freedom is achieved through conformity to reality. Escape from physical burdens is gained by the proper knowledge and use of natural phenomena and laws. We remove diseases of body and mind through the observance of the essentials of health and mental growth. Spiritual freedom is likewise achieved through conformity to the truth. Only the truth can free a man of the sin he commits against the truth. Moreover, we talk about freedom from want and fear and the freedom to think and to worship; but we should think of free men, of the source of freedom, and of the fact that free men are dependent upon devotion to spiritual truth and conformity to it. They are freed from bondage to lesser loyalties by their servanthood to the greater loyalty to Christ.

Paul knew how Christ's power gives freedom; for when Paul met Christ, he escaped from pharisaical fanaticism into unselfish love; from enslavement to tradition into exhilarating loyalty to living reality; from the exacting shackles of rules of conduct into invigorating commitment to vital principles; and from Hebrew arrogance into the joy of citizenship in the kingdom of God.

The Cross and a Divine Mission

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

—Matthew 16:21-23

THE CROSS IS OUR MOST IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS SYMBOL. NO MAN CAN fully comprehend its meaning. Jesus alone clearly understood its profound significance.

For our Lord the Cross represented full commitment to a supreme mission. He realized that the mission required adequate equipment, and so he spent long years of serious study in acquiring facts and in developing knowledge. He was aware that intellectual honesty is an essential of integrity, and he therefore kept every window of his alert mind wide open to the truth and proper inferences of the truth. He understood that wisdom is a prerequisite to righteousness and freedom; so he observed exist-

ing conditions, reflected upon ancient codes and ideas, toughened his mental fiber with sane appreciation of human situations of every type, and developed insights and judgments that were clear, comprehensive, and faultless. The apex of wisdom is awareness of the Eternal, and the acquisition of such wisdom entails heavy personal obligations. Jesus acquired the highest mode of wisdom, and as a result of his knowledge of truth he was impelled to devote himself unreservedly to a positive ministry to human need.

Now when a person thinks, he suffers; for recognition of human error, strife, waste, and misery inevitably causes pain. When a man commits himself to social and religious advancement, he invites condemnation; for all too often people having vested interests of money, reputation, and authority bitterly oppose him. It is a persistent, tragic fact that self-righteous guardians of the *status quo* with one hand furnish weapons for destroying contemporary prophets, while with the other hand they solicit funds with which to erect monuments to ancient martyrs. As one recalls Athenians who made the city immortal, pioneers in modern science, and men who fought for religious freedom, he observes a vast pantheon filled with men who were handicapped, persecuted, and killed by reactionists.

Our Lord knew people, and he was aware of the discouraging conditions, the critical situations, and the murderous plots he would experience. He nevertheless devoted himself completely to the will of God. He was driven out of his home synagogue. He worked hard in teaching his disciples, who at times seemed to refuse to learn. He heard slanderous innuendoes concerning his parentage. He was accused of madness and blasphemy, and religious authorities said that he was in league with the devil. Our

Lord thus bore heavy burdens of misunderstanding, ingratitude, jealousy, threats, ostracism, and loneliness along a road which, he knew, led to an utterly unjust and untimely death. But he chose that way because his deep sense of mission permitted him no other course.

When Simon Peter tried to persuade Jesus not to go to Jerusalem, where he would encounter peril, our Lord said to him: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

The Cross and Integrity

And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Prætorium; and they called together the whole band.

And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head.

And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.

And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

—Mark 15:15-20

WHEN HE COULD HAVE SAVED HIS LIFE BY COMPROMISE OF HIS MISSION as a teacher, Socrates said to those about to condemn him: "Men of Athens, I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy." This man, who felt himself called of God to teach, thus refused to discredit his

integrity or his mission; for his high conception of God, of himself, and of his work would not permit him to stoop.

A man's character conforms to his conception of himself and to the objects of his devotions. A person's loyalty is grounded therefore in the God he worships and the values he respects. At the present time secularism discredits faith, opportunism obscures permanent values, sensuous hedonism clouds ethical principles, and expediency veils spiritual reality. In recent years, consequently, vast numbers of people have bartered their souls in exchange for promises of quick success, power, ease, and personal security. But the willful violation of personal integrity and loyalty to truth—wherever and however such compromise occurs—is a cardinal, degenerating, contagious evil.

For Jesus the Cross meant absolute refusal to compromise his divinity or discredit his sacred mission. He never once abused his faith, his purity, his purpose, or his work. He accepted obligations that required hard labor; he spoke the truth despite imminent danger; he healed the infirm regardless of inevitable antagonism; he exposed evils in view of certain condemnation. Our Master never weakened before appeals to accept political authority, never stooped before an applauding crowd, never cringed before a theological hierarchy, never quailed before political despots, never whimpered in the presence of pain and death.

How different our Lord was from others! In evasion of responsibility Pilate washed his weak hands. With sublime dignity Jesus said to Pilate: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." Simon Peter fearfully swore that he never knew Jesus. Our Lord looked upon the poor, confused disciple with melting affection and redeeming tenderness. A murderous,

saturnalian mob shouted: "Crucify him, crucify him." Jesus prayed: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Taunting, jealous, vindictive, fanatical priests walked about the cross, wagged their silly heads, and, mocking him, said: "Save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Jesus said: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Jesus remained on the cross. He had divine self-respect; he was about his Father's kingly business; and he would therefore not use a selfish means or a spectacular method to establish his divinity or to reveal God's love and mercy.

The Cross and Love

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

—Matthew 10:37-39

THE WORLD IS FULL OF CONFUSION, DEPRESSION, AND FRUSTRATION. It suffers bankruptcy of ideals and impoverishment of faith. There is no way out except that of the Cross.

For our Lord the Cross meant impelling, sacrificial love. Jesus, of course, knew and honored filial devotion; he so respected Joseph that he consistently referred to God as a kind, loving, and gracious Father, and he was as deeply devoted to his mother as only the oldest son of a widowed mother can be. He never failed to respond to a plea made by a father or a mother in behalf of some member of the household. Jesus also appreciated and exalted friendship. He never disregarded or deserted a friend. He respected and paid high tribute to John the Baptist, heard the plea of the centurion in behalf of his servant, healed the afflicted boy

at the foot of the mountain, and restored the health of the man brought to him by friends.

But our Master possessed a love that transcended any temporal interest. It was unaffected and intelligent devotion to a great cause and priceless values. It was appreciation of right, honor, justice, beauty, and goodness. It was attachment to magnetic truth, to reality that drew him beyond secondary affairs and caused him to refuse to yield to fatigue, hunger, danger, safety, or promises of political prestige and ecclesiastical authority. The love that our Lord knew enabled him to say: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And throughout his ministry, whatever situation he discovered, however steep and tortuous his road, he never violated the platform which he proclaimed.

Jesus found the pattern of his life, and made the boundaries of his earthly kingdom of the substance of sacrificial love. He was therefore able to transform men and women. He changed humble fishermen into great leaders, converted taxgatherers into staunch disciples and honorable citizens, and healed the ill of body and of mind. He removed despair arising from moral and social maladjustment. When Paul became dominated by the love of Christ, he was so reoriented by inner transformation of values and ideals that, repudiating his pride in Roman citizenship, Hebrew ancestry, scholarship, and ecclesiastical prominence and renouncing his fanatical devotion to Mosaic authority, he accepted

instead the lash, chains, ostracism, and the headsman's axe; and he regarded it an honor and a joy to make the exchange.

Jesus learned, through foresight and bitter experience, that open expression of such deep sympathy, constructive love, and good will would cause many people to hate him. He realized that intolerant authorities would judge him in terms of their own provincial, prejudiced, intolerant natures. He knew that he would make enemies who would kill him if he exposed ignorance and hypocrisy. He was so good that he had no desire to become a martyr; he suffered bitter agony in Gethsemane; he endured insults from persons of little minds and smaller souls. But he chose to pay the awful price of severe torture, apparent shame, and gross injustice; and in doing so he made the Cross the symbol of God's boundless love.

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The Cross and Triumph

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.

—Hebrews 2:9-10

WHY SHOULD A PERSON CHOOSE DELIBERATELY A WAY OF LIFE THAT requires hard labor, exact training, the denial of personal comforts, and the humiliation of public condemnation? Is it reasonable that one should strive to help unfortunate people who are indifferent and ungrateful, work in psychopathic hospitals, minister in a leper colony, or spend one's life with people in slums, torrid jungles, and arctic wastes?

There are numerous people who feel that the objects of human ministry are not worthy of such sacrifices and that the objects of faith—whether God, man, or moral law—are the ephemeral vapors of empty sentimentality. For them religion is a myth having value only as an escapism, a mental opiate, or a means of

social control. The religious skeptic insists that logic, science, and history as such never prove the existence of the human soul, immortality, God, or the ultimate triumph of truth. For science has not isolated and described the soul, no logic has demonstrated immortality, and no person has produced a formula by which he could prove the existence of God.

Nevertheless, for Jesus there was only one course he was able to follow. For him the Cross meant faith in the reality and goodness of God, and for him the Cross was an acid test of that superlative conviction. From the point of view of temporal values our Lord chose an unwise course. He largely disregarded existing standards of greatness and of effective influence; he permitted himself to become the victim of unscrupulous men, when he could have escaped them and the injustice they imposed upon him. In the end his work appeared to be leading toward inglorious failure.

For our Lord was on a cross, dying between two criminals. He had devoted his ministry to the unfortunate; and now, typical of the reception his life had met, one thief mocked him and the other sought a blessing; bigoted enemies were crucifying him and a few kind friends stood near. It seemed that his death was shameful, his work a failure, his future oblivion. But his complete devotion to the truth, his unqualified love for people, his immaculate character, and his deep compassion made him pray for those whose ignorance and hate were killing him. Our Saviour was aware that life is not a mockery of fate; that men are not "tormented atoms in a bed of mud"; that hope is not a momentary, delusive glow in a vast night. Jesus knew God, and he

therefore realized that goodness is imperishable reality, which all the vast forces of evil cannot destroy.

So at the Cross, as evil attacked good, impurity surrounded purity, injustice assaulted right, ignorance mocked wisdom, despair enshrouded hope, and death enveloped life, our blessed Lord, with supreme confidence, committed his spirit unto God.

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